Hannah And Her Sisters

1 Thanksgiving dinner at a nice Central Park West apartment. It is afternoon, pre-dinner and the guests, about a dozen adults and three or four kids, are all joking, chatting, playing, eating canapes, and drinking.

WE FOCUS ON a lovely young woman who is unself-consciously mingling and enjoying herself in a familiar way.

Over her actions we hear the thoughts of a man who is observing her. She is Lee -- he is Elliot. During this sequence WE WILL CUT AROUND TO SEE who is doing this thinking and then continue to CROSS CUT at judiciously chosen moments, she the observed, him the observer.

A Thanksgiving party needs to be ad-libbed and both characters must have their mundane little actions throughout the thinking.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS
(over Lee partying)
God she's beautiful ... She's got the prettiest eyes ... And she looks so sexy in that shirt ... I just want to be alone with her and hold her and kiss her and tell her how much I love her and take care of her ...

Perhaps this might be a possible good time to CUT AROUND TO REVEAL Elliot who's at the buffet table or whatever we choreograph.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS (contd)
It's embarrassing ... stop staring ... I can't help it. I'm consumed by her ... It's been months now. I dream about her ... I think about her at the office. I wonder if she even has the slightest inkling?

CUT BACK TO her.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS (contd)
But how could she? Unless I'm real obvious and I only think I'm being casual ... Christ, on any occasion we're together I'm always checking her out and directing all my conversation to her ... And we get along great ... the few opportunities we've had to have long conversations were exhilarating ...

CUT TO memory shot just moments prior. Lee brushes past him in doorway -- we suit action to following words:

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS (contd)
Before, when we squeezed past each other in the doorway and my lips accidentally brushed her hair and I smelled that perfume on the back of her neck -- Jesus -- I thought I was gonna swoon.

CUT BACK TO present, Elliot still thinking.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS (contd)
I can't go on like this ... I'm obsessed ... I knew she'd be over here today so I couldn't get to sleep last night.

Now Hannah comes over interrupting Elliot's reverie. She is his wife and Lee's sister.

HANNAH
Elliot?
(no response)
Sweetheart?

ELLIOT
(snapping to)
Huh?

HANNAH
(a canape)
Did you taste these? Holly and her friend made them.

He tastes one.

ELLIOT
Um -- fantastic ... Your sister is an unbelievable cook.
(stopping Holly who walks near)
You should open your own restaurant.

HOLLY
We practically are. Not a restaurant but April and I are going to do catering.

HANNAH
You're kidding.

HOLLY
No, we decided. We love to cook for all our friends -- so until an acting job comes through we can pick up extra money doing just little private parties.

ELLIOT
It's a great idea. This is where your talent lies.
(a faux pas)

HOLLY
(to Hannah)
Can I speak to you privately?

ELLIOT
(kidding)
She tells me everything, I'm her husband.
(then, latching on to April who passes)
April, you and Holly are culinary geniuses.

Holly and Hannah now alone.

HOLLY
I have to borrow some money -- don't get upset.

HANNAH
I never get upset over that.

HOLLY
This is the last time. I promise. And I'm keeping strict accounts.

HANNAH
Holly, please, don't insult me.

HOLLY
Someday I'll pay it all back.

HANNAH
How much do you need?

HOLLY
Six hundred dollars.

HANNAH
(a trace of coldness, hardly perceptible)
Uh-huh.

HOLLY
I know -- it's a lot ... We have this catering idea -- and I think it's going to be great -- you admit April and I are great cooks ... But in order to get started there's some things we have to buy and some old debts I have outstanding.

HANNAH
Tell me the truth -- are we talking about cocaine again?

HOLLY
I swear ... We've already got some requests to do a few dinner parties. I mean obviously I'm not going to be a caterer forever ... we both still go on auditions and something could come up any moment ... but the parties are at night so my days are free. I can still take acting class ... I haven't done drugs in a year.

HANNAH
I worry about you.

HOLLY
I know you still don't trust me. Hannah, I've been so lonely these past two years. You really feel it at the holidays. Can you believe I still miss Howard?

HANNAH
That's why I invited Phil Gammage here tonight. I thought you might enjoy each other.

HOLLY
Oh he's such a loser..

HANNAH
(selling)
He's the headmaster of Daisy's school.

HOLLY
Perfect. He reminds me of Ichabod Crane. His adam's apple keeps jumping when he gets excited.

HANNAH
You're terrible. He's light years ahead of Howard.

HOLLY
Please don't start on my ex.

HANNAH
How can you still defend him? He treated you badly and got you on drugs and ran out on you and you still remember him as a genius.

Lee enters or comes over.

LEE
We need an anti-histamine for guess who?

HOLLY
Mom?

LEE
She thinks she's feeling her asthma. Dad naturally forgot to bring her pills.

HOLLY
At least she's not drinking.

The three sisters laugh and touch and interact with affectionate familiarity.

HANNAH
Doesn't she look beautiful in that black dress?

LEE
Yes and she knows it because she's flirting with all the men here.

HOLLY
So what's new?

LEE
Meanwhile dad is draped over the keyboard ready to break out the old nostalgia.

The girls are laughing.

HANNAH
Ask Elliot for anti-histamine. He has some somewhere.

Lee goes off.

HOLLY
Ken didn't come with her.

HANNAH
When does Ken ever come with her?

HOLLY
He's such a creep.

CUT TO Evan, the dad, happy and high at the piano. Norma, the mother, near him.

EVAN
Now this is a song by Rodgers and Hart that nobody ever plays. Norma and I sang it in a revue in -- in --

NORMA
Evan, just play the song-- don't make it into a documentary.

Plays and sings one of the obscure tuneful Rodgers and Hart songs.

SHOT of Gammage, the headmaster, his adam's apple bobbing as he enjoys the party.

2 CUT TO Elliot and Lee off together in bedroom.

ELLIOT
(searching for pills)
I know it's here someplace ...

LEE
(picking up half open book)
I very much enjoyed that book you lent me -- Easter Parade. You were right. It had very special meaning for me.

ELLIOT
How's Ken? He didn't come ...

LEE
You know Ken -- one of his moods. Although it wasn't a terrible week ... he sold a picture.

ELLIOT
Oh great.

LEE
It was one of his better drawings. A very beautiful nude study. Actually it was me. He did a whole series of nudes of me. It's a funny feeling to know you're being hung naked in some stranger's living room. You can't tell it's me although Ken says it's my typical languid, reclining pose.

ELLIOT
(trying to keep controlled)
Right ... So, er, what else? What are you up to?

LEE
I don't know. My unemployment checks are running out. I was thinking of taking some courses at Columbia with the last of my savings.

ELLIOT
Like?

LEE
I don't know exactly. Maybe sociology or psychology ... I sometimes think I'd like to work with children ... although I never wanted to have any of my own ... I don't know ... you think it's dilettantish to take courses the rest of your life -- to learn about everything?

ELLIOT
It's great. If you can afford it. What you need is to marry some guy who can subsidize you and who's sensitive to your particular needs as regards quest for learning type thing --

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS
God -- can you hear yourself? Quest for learning type thing? Did you actually make that sentence?

LEE
Elliot, you're turning all red.

ELLIOT
Am I? I -- I -- I've been mixing my drinks and I'm a little flushed.

LEE
How about you? How did you like producing a play? I'll bet that was a different experience for you?

ELLIOT
I don't know. Maybe if I enjoyed Ibsen more. It was definitely different than just playing business manager to my usual list of infantile showbusiness types. I'm like a father figure. This one wants to buy a Rolls-Royce, and one wants a house in Kaneil Bay and a new Jaguar and if I say you can't afford it -- they have a tantrum and get mad at me.

LEE
You don't have to tell me about the immaturity of actors. I was raised by two.

ELLIOT
(finding bottle)
Incidentally, I always have clients who are furnishing places and some of them might be interested in buying art -- should I call you?

LEE
Well sure -- Ken would be real grateful for a sale.

3 CUT TO the dinner table amidst great conviviality and gobbling up of turkey.

Food is passed, kids yelp, there is oohing and ahhing over the beauty of the bird.

FATHER (EVAN VERRIT)
A toast -- this is a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner that Hannah made -- and we drink to her -- and we all congratulate her for her wonderful accomplishment this year -- her tremendous success in <u>A Doll's House</u>.

MOTHER (NORMA)
I played Nora and I hate to tell you what year and it's very difficult to behave like Torvald's little chipmunk without making a pretty big ass of yourself and Ibsen would have been damn proud of Hannah.

Laughter and drinking.

HANNAH
I'm very lucky. When I had the children I stopped working and decided to just devote myself to them and I've loved just raising a family but I always secretly hoped that maybe once every few years some little gem would come up to tempt me back on the stage just for a short while. Now that urge is out of my system for another few years and I can go back to the thing that makes me the happiest.

They all assent in hearty convivial fashion.

EVAN
Bravo!

NORMA
(with a nod to Elliot)
It was the classiest show on Broadway this year -- that the producer lost a little money ...

HANNAH
(hugging Elliot)
He was the smartest producer I ever worked for and the most attractive.

Affectionate crowd reaction.

Still Elliot steals glances at Lee and while our friends eat, joke, and drink WE CUT TO:

4 Later. Lee in a cab heading home.

LEE'S THOUGHTS
Is it my imagination or does Elliot have a little crush on me? It's funny, I've had that
(MORE)

LEE'S THOUGHTS (contd)
thought before. Remember a few weeks ago when I ran into them, shopping --

5 WE CUT TO a daytime ext. and continue to hear Lee's thoughts over a typical meeting on street.

LEE'S THOUGHTS (contd)
--He was very awkward and I noticed he did that self-conscious thing of straightening his hair ...

Elliot does that thing. They have met and it is played to suggest she might note in retrospect that he was a bit awkward.

6 CUT BACK TO her in cab.

LEE'S THOUGHTS (contd)
And he blushed tonight when we were alone in the bedroom. Elliot's sweet. I love talking to him. I wonder if he and Hannah are happy? She always says they are ... Although you never know with Hannah ... She's such a good actress you can never tell. I'm not sure her own performances don't even convince her. And Elliot did seem a little distracted tonight. Actually he's quite attractive. Sensitive. Had I of met him under other circumstances, I wonder....

7 CUT TO Holly and April riding home or walking or on bus.

APRIL
There were no interesting single men at the party.

HOLLY
It's depressing.

APRIL
I can't keep searching. I'm always checking the room out. I'm going to develop big eyes -- it's Darwinian.

HOLLY
Remember, "Streetcar" when Stella asks Blanche if she wants Mitch, she says, "I want to rest." Hits home, right? "I want to rest."

APRIL
On the up side, our canapes were a smash. And Hannah's terrific. So are your folks.

HOLLY
Can you believe the way they fawn over Hannah? I mean I adore Hannah but it's so shameless. It's like Lee and I didn't exist.

APRIL
No.

HOLLY
Ask Lee. Or Hannah even. We've all talked about it.

APRIL
Well they're obviously so proud of her success.

HOLLY
Boy -- we all go through life playing the hand we're dealt.

APRIL
Yeah? And what were you dealt?

HOLLY
A pair of sixes. No -- I'm two high pair but I keep losing to three deuces.

APRIL
If you're two high pair then I'm one medium pair.

HOLLY
You're three aces -- at least.

APRIL
You're sweet. And your sister Lee is --

HOLLY
She's three aces too. At least.

APRIL
And Hannah?

HOLLY
It's hard to tell with Hannah. She's either a full house -- or she's bluffing.

8 CUT TO Lee at home with Ken, the man she lives with.

She finisher her nocturnal ablutions and sits patiently down next to the tortured soul of Ken.

LEE
(once again with a sigh of trying to be understanding)
Why couldn't you come -- we all had a terrific time.

KEN
(calmly and decently but you know this guy is a volcano)
I'm going through a period of my life where I can't be around people. I didn't want to wind up abusing anyone.

LEE
My family are all very sweet.

KEN
You're the only person I can be with -- who I look forward to being with.

LEE
But you can't function with such rage against the human race.

KEN
I can't help it ... I try to reason with myself but in the end I always come to the same terrifying judgment.

LEE
It's too harsh.

KEN
I go by what I see. How people live -- their choices, the world they created for their children. Look around you. This is not a sweet little oasis in the universe enriched by loving people ... with maybe a few dark patches here and there ... It's a floating slaughter-house. The big question now is: Will anything survive our own evil much longer? My one consoling thought is that when the nuclear holocaust comes, for every poor, decent person that goes a thousand who deserve no better will go also.

LEE
Listen to yourself. If you believe that, what keeps you going?

KEN
You do.

LEE
That's too much responsibility for me.

KEN
Nobody's forcing you.

LEE
(sighs, takes a beat)
Elliot said he might have some clients for you.

KEN
I'm sure those morons he handles all have a deep feeling for art.

LEE
He was just trying to do a nice thing.

KEN
Because he likes you.

LEE
Me?

KEN
Elliot lusts after you.

LEE
Based on what? You never see him?

KEN
Based on -- whenever you see him, you always come home full of books he's recommended or films you must see.

LEE
He's my sister's husband. I think you'd like him. He's very intelligent.

KEN
He's a glorified accountant and he's after you and I'd prefer to
(MORE)

KEN (contd)
sell my work to people who appreciate it, not rock stars.

9 CUT TO Elliot and Hannah at home. They're putting kids to bed.

HANNAH
Tonight was fun. And you're always extra adorable when you drink too much. I felt a little bad for Lee and Holly. Here it is the holidays and they're not happy.

ELLIOT
Lee's happy with Ken, isn't she?

HANNAH
Not really.

ELLIOT
So why does she stay with him?

HANNAH
She's been trying to get up the nerve to leave for ages. Believe me, if she met someone else -- but she hasn't. Kiss me.

They kiss.

HANNAH (contd)
By the way, I saw you staring at my sister tonight.

ELLIOT
Me?! If anything I was staring at Holly.

HANNAH
That's who I meant. Don't you think she's really charming?

ELLIOT
Yes. Though she can be a little intense.

HANNAH
She was so imprsssive when we were young and then she married that jerk who wrecked her. How could she choose him?

ELLIOT
How could you choose me?

HANNAH
Oh no. How could you choose me? Free wheeling bachelor meets crazy actress -- mother of three with two adopted -- you took the chance. I was in love with you in the first five minutes.

Kiss. More intimacy and we CUT TO later. Middle of night, Elliot rises from bed to go to kitchen and grab some cold turkey. All the way we hear his thoughts.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS
What kind of man am I? My wife adores me.... she trusts me ... she's she's given me a wonderful home after after so many lonely years ... Unsatisfying romances that come to nothing ... all those endless dinner dates leading no where -- how quick you forget -- always looking for perfection ... Whatever that means ... Hannah's beautiful and smart and talented ... the kids are so nice ... She's a solid citizen ... I like making love with her ... although maybe that's waning a little ... Had a little trouble again tonight ... but I drank a lot. Admit it -- At the moment of climax you were doing it with Lee. Oh god -- what is it with Lee? My heart just goes out to her ... I want to take her in my arms ... And the truth is, on paper Hannah has it all over Lee ... She's so much more substantial ... but that's on paper ... No; but it counts! ... It's reality ... Jesus, Lee can never find herself ... She doesn't have a job or a goal ... Unemployment insurance ... doesn't want to have kids ... not a good sign ... bad track record with men. Look at all these negative warning signals I'm listing ... I mean college courses ... What kind of bullshit is that? At her age she's going back to college? ... Oh god why did this have to happen to me? I was happy with Hannah. Can I never be satisfied with her again? I never looked at any other women ... not even Lee ... She was the kid sister ... I saw her now and then with Hannah and we seemed
(MORE)

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS (contd)
to have a good rapport ... we enjoyed chatting ... Then one day --

10 CUT TO Lee and Hannah and Ken and Elliot strolling and suiting action to word. Ext. Little Italy.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS (contd)
-- we're all in little Italy on a Sunday afternoon ... And Ken and Hannah were looking in a store window -- and Lee and I were talking about how we both loved Rome and both preferred Europe to the United States ... and she was talking about her trip to Venice and I noticed for the first time how beautiful she was ... not just pretty because that was obvious -- but deeply beautiful in a way that I've never recovered from. After that, everything she ever said to me had charm, either from the content or because of the sound of her voice.

11 CUT BACK TO him after depicting the above. He's looking at a photo of Lee and Hannah that Hannah had.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS (contd)
Look, pal -- she's your wife's sister. You really think for one second she'd consider you romantically? And is that what you want? To leave Hannah for Lee? Are you willing to do that to Hannah? After all you two have meant to one another? It would destroy her. Her husband and her sister. Ouch ... That's why this must remain just a fantasy. A thought crime. But nothing more.
(returning to bed)
And with my luck I'd leave Hannah for Lee and then things wouldn't work out with Lee and Hannah'd be crushed and I'd be out on my ear ... Great. Forget the kid sister, will you? You got an early day at the office.

CUT TO:

12 Mickey Sachs, a high powered television producer on the day of his live show.

In addition to all the panics and problems of last minute live entertainment. This scene should have pace in terms of its shooting. It should be in motion, Mickey walking down a hall and/or in and out of the studio where last minute rehearsing going on -- an air of tension and motion.

MICKEY
What do you mean they won't let us do the sketch?

PAUL
Talk to standards and practices -- they think it's too dirty.

MICKEY
They saw it in rehearsal! What'd they do, suddenly figure out what the words mean?

MARY
Half hour to show time!

LARRY
We're short -- the show is five minutes short!

MICKEY
We timed everything long -- how can we be short?

PAUL
If we have to pull out the sketch we'll be ten minutes short!

(CONTINUED)

MICKEY
They can't do this to me -- I got a live show on in thirty minutes!

LARRY
This never would have happened with the old regime. It's because our ratings are low.

MICKEY
I don't want to hear about the old regime. I'm the new regime. My head's bursting open. I got a migraine.

GAIL
Mickey, you better go to Ronny's dressing room -- this kid must've taken 1600 Quaaludes. I don't think he'll be awake for the show.

MICKEY
I can't believe this is happening to me.
(looks up)
Why me, Lord? You listening?

PAUL
(introducing Mickey to Ed Smythe)
Mickey Sachs -- our new producer. Ed Smythe. Standards and Practices. Ed's new also.

MICKEY
What is this with the sketch. Suddenly it's dirty?

ED
Child molestation is a touchy subject with the affiliates.

MICKEY
What are you talking about? According to the papers half the country's doing it.

ED
Yes but you name names.

MICKEY
We never name names. We always call him The Pope.

ED
That sketch cannot go on the air.

WRITER
(appears)
Hey, who changed my sketch about the PLO?

MICKEY
It needed cutting! We took out four lines.

WRITER
The whole premise is ruined.

MICKEY
It's not ruined. Everybody is married to every line. I used to write sketches. It's not so delicate.

WRITER
I don't care! I don't want anyone tampering with my god damn work without telling me! You want 'em cut, I'll cut 'em myself!

LARRY
If we repeat an old sketch from an earlier show we don't have the right set. We have the child molestation set.

MARY
Twenty-five minutes to air time.

MICKEY
I can't put this show on. We gotta fill that ten minutes!

13 Enters Ronny's room. Ronny is out of it.

RON
I don't feel good, Mickey.

MICKEY
Ronny, you're in every sketch. What'd you do, swallow a drugstore?

RON
I lost my voice ...

MICKEY
I need a Tagament. My ulcer's killing me.

RON
You want a Quaalude? I got a whole suitcase.

14 CUT TO music and TV Studio.

ANNOUNCER
And now -- Live! -- From New York City! -- The Satire Factory! With tonight's special guest -- Jay Alonzo!

Music -- sound applause ...

15 CUT from this hodge podge to a day later. Larry, Gail, Paul, and Mickey are in his plush, modern producer's office at Thirty Rock. It is a post mortem.

PAUL
(poring over sheets anxiously)
Lookit these numbers -- We're last -- we were beaten by a re-run of "Wild Kingdom."

MICKEY
(newspaper)
Look at what this bum says about me: "How long is the network going to sit by while producer Mickey Sachs systematically destroys what was for years one of the most original shows on television?"

GAIL
(newspapers)
This one's pretty bad too ... Oh, and this one's brutal.

MICKEY
Ok, do I have to hear every one? Are you a sadist?

LARRY
Mary said that Michael Jackson might be willing to host one of the shows if you spoke with him personally.

MICKEY
Speak with him? I'd cut my arm off to get him. I'm not letting this show sink. I got a reputation to preserve.

GAIL
(reviews)
I've never seen the word "heinous" used quite this way before.

SECRETARY
(enters)
They want to see you upstairs later this morning. You have lunch at the Russian Tea Room with your accountant, a writers' meeting at three -- you're auditioning new comedians at six, budget meeting seven thirty --

16 CUT TO Mickey on analyst's couch.

MICKEY
I can't take it. Meetings, appointments, deals. And for what? So I can make a fool of myself? So Time Magazine can call me a "sub-par little giggle merchant"? I'm sure they're going to fire me ... I don't sleep nights and I'm a mass of psychosomatic ailments. I go to the doctors, they never find anything ... Now I fantasize I'm going deaf in one ear ... I put a lot of doctors' kids through college ... And every time my ex-partner succeeds it kills me.

17 CUT TO Mickey's thoughts visuallized. His ex-partner, a Norman Lear type, nice looking. He is clearly a success as he does something like exit his car and bound into CBS or something.

MICKEY (VO)
He's got the Midas touch ... we wrote comedy together for years -- we broke up and we try producing on our own ... he moves out to the coast ... and every silly show he does makes millions ... I finally get a shot and I strike
(MORE)

MICKEY (VO contd)
out. I can't let that happen. Do not want to be a failure ... not a loser ...

18 CUT BACK TO couch.

MICKEY
I want success. I admit it. I like my co-op, I like my Mercedes. Sue me. And I want to be thought of as a contributer. I want to accomplish something. It was so embarrassing last week at my folks' house.

19 CUT TO memory cut of Mickey dining with the folks at their place. Two elderly Jews. Clearly they are not comfortable with their son.

MOTHER
You got some terrible write-ups in the newspapers last week.

MICKEY
As long as the ratings are good.

MOTHER
They said the ratings were terrible and since you took over the show it's gone straight down-hill.

FATHER
Sol Basser called from Miami. He said the papers down there were terrible too.

MOTHER
A disaster they called it. No, no -- a catastrophe.

MICKEY
The show needs time to build. You know the press -- they exaggerate everything.

MOTHER
What was it, Martin, a disaster or a catastrophe?

FATHER
Meanwhile your ex-partner, I see he produces one hit after another.

MOTHER
His latest is a funny show. Everybody in the condominium waits for it.

FATHER
You couldn't hook up with him again? He doesn't want any part of you?

MICKEY
I don't want to hook up with him again.

MOTHER
What does he need with Mickey? The man's a huge success.

MICKEY
I've got plenty of ideas for other shows too. Series, mini-series -- specials. I'm well thought of around the networks.

FATHER
Ok, but meanwhile you have an ulcer.

MOTHER
It was a disaster -- not a catastrophe, a disaster.

20 CUT TO Mickey exiting Tea Room with his accountant.

ACCOUNTANT
(as they walk down block)
The bottom line is that your tax shelters are being disallowed. I don't know what your former accountant had in mind when he got you into them. Two of the limited partnerships have already pleaded guilty to fraud. The other eight are under investigation going back to 1974.

MICKEY
Can I go to jail?

ACCOUNTANT
No -- you're just liable for back taxes.

MICKEY
How much?

ACCOUNTANT
The taxes plus the interest ... A considerable amount ... We'll have to sell off some of your investments and maybe even get a loan to keep the cash flow moving. Hey, I notice you're getting some grey hairs.

MICKEY
Since lunch.

21 CUT TO Mickey at ear doctor's, undergoing simple audiometer check-up. Mickey signals tones by holding up fingers, earphones -- the usual.

CUT TO him after test.

DR. ABEL
(checking chart results)
Well, I wish I could say you were wrong but you have suffered a hearing loss in your right ear.

MICKEY
(any news relating to his health is always grave to him)
Really?

DR. ABEL
(a bit concerned)
A mid-range drop. And the ear is clear ... When did you first notice it?

MICKEY
(nervous already)
Me? Recently -- at first on the phone -- within two, three, six months ...

Doctor checking chart gravely.

DR. ABEL
Were you exposed to a loud noise -- or had an ear infection or a cold in the ear?

MICKEY
No -- not that I can recall ...

DR. ABEL
Think ... could you be forgetting? A car blowout? A firecracker? Maybe a virus?

MICKEY
No ... I'd remember. I'm such a hypochondriac.

DR. ABEL
Are your parents hard of hearing?

MICKEY
They hear like wolves.

DR. ABEL
Are you around rock music much? On the show?

MICKEY
No.

DR. ABEL
See -- unfortunately it's nerve loss.

MICKEY
Nerve loss?

DR. ABEL
It's hearing that won't come back.

MICKEY
Really? Is it progressive?

DR. ABEL
Not necessarily at all. It's odd that it's one ear ...

MICKEY
Why? It's usually both?

DR. ABEL
What about tinnitus. Do you ever hear anything like ringing or noises? Buzzing?

MICKEY
Er ... now that you mention it ... yes.

DR. ABEL
Uh-huh.

MICKEY
Sometimes I think I hear ringing ... maybe buzzing.

DR. ABEL
See, what we did is just a simple audiometer test. What I'd really like for you to do is to make an appointment up at the hospital and have a complete hearing test done. They have much more sophisticated equipment. Then we could learn exactly what this is about. May I make an appointment for you?

MICKEY
Gee, this comes at my busy time.

DR. ABEL
I think it's worth a check though. And I'm sure it's nothing.

MICKEY
You concerned because it's only one ear?

DR. ABEL
It's highly unlikely that it's anything other than some little unexplained hearing loss -- but why speculate? It's easy enough to check.

22 CUT TO Mickey in phone booth. CROSS CUT phone call with his G.P., Doctor Wilkes.

MICKEY
Er. Doctor Wilkes? Mickey Sachs ... hi ... just want to get some information if you have a minute?

CUT TO:

DR. WILKES
Sure, Mickey, what's up?

CUT TO:

MICKEY
If you have a hearing loss in one ear and it's not from the flu or a loud noise or anything -- what's the cause?

CUT TO:

DR. WILKES
Anything. It's often hereditary ... a virus ... even a small noise can do it.

CUT TO:

MICKEY
Nothing worse?

CUT TO:

DR. WILKES
Well -- sure. I guess the dark end of the spectrum would be a brain tumor.

CUT TO:

MICKEY
(not thrilled)
Really?

CUT TO:

DR. WILKES
Does the patient have accompanying symptoms? Ringing or other noises? Buzzing? Head pains? That would be something to look for.

23 CUT TO Mickey at work, forced by schedule to listen to comics auditioning that afternoon.

He sits with the show cronies while a comic does his stuff in his office. The cronies seem to be enjoying the comic. Mickey's mind is a million miles away.

Deep in thought, he tries to fake a laugh now and then he realizes he should be paying attention.

The comic ends his routine and goes.

LARRY
Funny kid.

MICKEY
Huh? Yeah ... very ...

MARY
Where are you now? You're dazed.

MICKEY
I'm -- yeah ... You hear that?

LARRY
What?

MICKEY
Is there a ringing noise? Is it my imagination?

PAUL
I don't hear anything.

MICKEY
You don't hear a continuous ringing?

They all ad-lib agreement.

MARY
You're white as a sheet. Do you feel all right?

MICKEY
I'm fine ... just wanna wash up. Been on the go all day.

Enters his bathroom, faces mirror and converses with himself.

MICKEY (contd)
Will you relax -- you idiot -- you don't have a brain tumor. You've worked yourself into a state. You have a slight hearing loss. It's nothing. But why is it only in one ear? You always leap to the absolute, ultimate, worst conclusion. I've been perfectly healthy the last year. I haven't had a cold. The worst you could say is, in the past months I've had some bad headaches ...
(realizing what he's saying)
Hey ... that's been the pressure of the show ... George Gershwin had a brain tumor ... I think I read he was always imagining he was smelling burning rubber ...
(smells ... then he listens)
Oh great ... suddenly I smell rubber ... and I hear a ringing ... somebody's burning a tire and ringing a bell ... Ok, c'mon ... let's go ... you got a show -- with low ratings ... Let's get our priorities straight here.

Puts cold water on his face and returns to office.

SECRETARY
Dr. Abel called. He said he made an appointment for you tomorrow morning at eleven at the hospital hearing lab. I told him you were busy then, but he said they're fitting you in specially and he'd like you to keep the appointment.

MICKEY
Really?

SECRETARY
You have a meeting with Michael Jackson at eleven.

MICKEY
Cancel it.

24 CUT TO a dinner party being catered by Holly and April. It is a small NY party -- about twenty guests.

Holly is passing amongst them with her canapes.

ETHEL
These are delicious.

BURT
I love those cheese things.

ETHEL
And what are those?

HOLLY
Quail eggs.

ETHEL
They're fabulous.

HOLLY
Try the shrimp puffs.

They do, much approbation, Holly returns to kitchen where April is preparing to bring out another course.

APRIL
The stroganoff is ready.

HOLLY
We're a big hit.

APRIL
In this we're a big hit. Yesterday I auditioned for Come Back Little Sheba. There I wasn't a big hit.

And she's out the door leaving Holly to work kitchen for the moment.

Presently David Tolchin enters, a good-looking man about forty-four.

DAVID
Any more clams?

HOLLY
Yes -- a few.

DAVID
Can't resist.

HOLLY
How flattering.

DAVID
Listen -- you guys are much too attractive to be caterers. Something's wrong.

HOLLY
We're actresses.

DAVID
This your first job?

HOLLY
Really? Is the food that bad?

DAVID
Oh, not at all.

April swings back in and Holly is now ready to go.

APRIL
We need the bread and more baked lasagna.

Now April is alone with David.

DAVID
I know. You're an actress with a great flair for shrimp puffs.

APRIL
The shrimp puffs are Holly's. I do the caviar crepes.

DAVID
And the quail is responsible for the quail eggs.

APRIL
Let's hope so.

Holly re-enters, all three are there.

HOLLY
I stole you two extra clams.

DAVID
Ah -- Incidentally, I'm David Tolchin.

APRIL
April Knox.

DAVID
And you're Holly.

HOLLY
We're The Stanislavski Catering Company.

DAVID
Now I'll tell you the truth. I came in here because I'm bored stiff by the party.

HOLLY
What makes you think we're more interesting?

DAVID
(turning on small tv set in kitchen)
Well actually I plan to watch Aida if I won't get in your way.

APRIL
You're not in the way.

HOLLY
We saw Pavarotti in Ernani at the Met. I cried.

DAVID
I cry at the opera.

APRIL
So do I. I get limp during the last scene of Traviata. Limp.

DAVID
Me too. I have a private box at the Met. I bring my little bottle of wine, open it, and I watch and I sip and I cry. It's disgusting.

HOLLY
What do you do?

DAVID
I'm an architect.

The girls are impressed.

APRIL
What kind of things do you build?

DAVID
You really interested?

They ad-lib affirmatively.

DAVID (contd)
What time do you get off?

25 CUT TO SHOT of some structure he's done. CUT REVERSE and the three are sitting in David's snappy car opposite it.

HOLLY
It's terrific.

DAVID
I wanted that ground level space to encourage people to just stream through.

Note: David's line depends on what we find.

APRIL
It has -- an -- "organic quality" -- it's wholly -- "interdependent" -- if you know what I mean. I can't put it in words. The important thing is that it breathes.

DAVID
It's funny, April, people pass vibrant structures all the time in this city and never take the time to appreciate them. I get the impression you tune in on your environment.

HOLLY
It's very important.

APRIL
Which are your favorite buildings, David?

DAVID
Would you like to see some?

APRIL
I'd love to.

DAVID
(pushes in tape in car. Opera)
Well let's do it.

26 MONTAGE. Music blaring. Some well-picked structures. Finally we wind up before one of the horrible examples of contemporary work -- they're not hard to find.

DAVID
This makes me weep too, but for another reason.

HOLLY
It drags the whole block down with it ... Environmentwise.

APRIL
You should be very proud of your work. It stands up alongside the best of everything we saw.

DAVID
Time will tell. And speaking of time, it's late. How do we do this? Who gets dropped first?

The moment of truth for the ladies. They ad-lib shyly.

HOLLY
Gee -- I don't know.

APRIL
I live downtown --

HOLLY
Me too --

APRIL
(to Holly)
You're a little closer if we take the drive.

HOLLY
The drive is closed off, isn't it?

They are each trying very gracefully not to be the first taken home.

DAVID
(to Holly)
Well if you live in the Village -- you're probably first.

HOLLY
Ok.

They pull off. As David drives them we hear Holly's thoughts.

HOLLY'S THOUGHTS
Naturally I get taken home first. Obviously he prefers April. Of course I was so tongue-tied all night. I can't believe I said that about the Guggenheim. My stupid little roller skating joke. I should never tell jokes. Mom can tell 'em and Hannah but I kill 'em. And where did April come up with that stuff about Adolph Loos and terms like, "organic form"? ... Well naturally -- she went to Brandeis -- but I don't think she knows what she's talking about. Could you believe the way she was calling him, David? ... "Yes, David -- I feel that way too, David. What a marvelous space, David." I hate April. She's pushy. Now they'll dump me and she'll invite him up ... I blew it ... And I really like him a lot. Oh screw it ... I'm not going to get all upset. I'll get into bed, turn on a movie and take an extra Seconal.

The car speeds into the night as WE CUT TO:

27 EXT: DAY

SHOT of Elliot waiting nervously on the street. Finally WE SEE the object of his intent is Lee as she exits her building and walks to corner. Elliot follows, then, taking a comically circuitous route, winds up ahead of

her, browsing in a store window. She passes, he looks up and fakes a coincidental meeting.

ELLIOT
Oh my goodness -- hi.

LEE
Elliot. What are you doing here?

ELLIOT
Looking at some books ... killing time ... I have a meeting with a client near here ... I'm quite early ... What are you? Well, you live near here. Where are you headed?

LEE
I was just going to my AA meeting.

ELLIOT
My god, why do you still go to those? You're not a drinker.

LEE
Oh but I was. Before I met Ken, I used to drink beer all day. I couldn't see straight. You didn't know me then.

ELLIOT
You must've been very unhappy.

LEE
Unhappy and fat. The AA meetings are still very comforting.

ELLIOT
I'll never understand it. You're so bright and beautiful and charming. I think -- what problems can she possibly have ...

LEE
Don't let me get started on my childhood. Y'know, there's a great bookstore a couple of blocks from here that if you don't know about, you should. You'd love it.

ELLIOT
If you have some free time ...

CUT TO:

28 INT: OLD BOOKSTORE

They browse, then:

LEE
They just have everything ... and they let you read them here without buying. Sometimes, on a rainy day I'll come in and just read all afternoon.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS
Say something. Tell her how you feel. Get the subject out in the open. She'll be outraged. She thinks of me as her brother-in-law. What if she tells Hannah? Christ, that's all I need ... But can't you tell she's flirting back? Unless I'm misreading the signs.

ELLIOT
Oh -- I want to get you a book.

LEE
Me?

ELLIOT
Yes. I know you'll love e.e. cummings' poetry.

LEE
I do love it.

ELLIOT
I read a poem of you and thought of his the other day -- Christ! -- I read a poem of his and thought of you the other day ...
(chastising himself self-conciously for flub)
You'll be fine, boy ...

29 CUT OUT ON the street. She's getting into a cab.

LEE
(holding book)
Thanks a lot.

ELLIOT
Thanks for showing me that bookstore. Maybe sometime you'll take me to an AA meeting. I'd love to see what goes on.

LEE
You'd have a good time.

ELLIOT
Oh -- don't forget -- the poem on page 112 ... It reminded me of you.

LEE
Really?

ELLIOT
112.

Cab pulls off.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS
Elliot -- what are you doing? This is your wife s sister. I don't know what I'm doing. It's like I'm moving forward on a conveyor belt.

30 CUT TO Ken. He is drawing. PAN the room -- classical music playing -- WE COME TO Lee off by herself reading the e.e. cummings.

We hear it aloud in her mind and it's the romantic one that ends something like " ... not even the rain has such small hands."

LEE'S THOUGHTS
somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond
any experience, your eyes have their silence:
in your most frail gesture are things which
enclose me,
or which i cannot touch because they are too
near

your slightest look easily will unclose me
though i have closed myself as fingers,
you open always petal by petal myself as Spring
opens
(touching skilfully, mysteriously) her first
rose

or if your wish be to close me, i and
my life will shut very beautifully, suddenly,
as when the heart of this flower imagines
the snow carefully everywhere descending;

nothing which we are to perceive in this world
equals
the power of your intense fragility: whose
texture

(MORE)

LEE'S THOUGHTS (contd)
compels me with the colour of its countries,
rendering death and forever with each breathing

(i do not know what it is about you that closes
and opens; only something in me understands
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)
nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands

Well, there's no question. He's crazy about me. My god -- I'm trembling ... what am I going to do? ... It's so flattering ... And even kind of erotic ... Because he's sensitive ... and very gentle ... But I can't allow myself these thoughts. The whole notion is indecent. I mean, be rational ... he's Hannah's husband. And I couldn't hurt or betray Hannah for the world ...
Funny -- the truth is , he's not really right for her. She loves the house in Connecticut and he can't stand the country. She wants an even bigger family and he's not so keen on that. I've heard him talk of quitting his job and moving to Paris ... but Hannah doesn't like that idea and she's so good at manipulating ... She's very strong willed. She always gets what she wants. Even as kids she knew exactly what she wanted and she went after it.
I never had the confidence. I was such a pathetic kid ... overweight and afraid to open my mouth. Hannah was a success so early it was intimidating ... I think it's ruined Holly. But let's face it, Hannah's real talented and very beautiful. Could Elliot actually prefer me to her?
It would be very romantic to live with him in Paris ...

31 CUT TO Mickey undergoing a more sophisticated hearing test at the hospital.

He is in a glass booth and in our quick MONTAGE he signals with earphones on, sounds are beeped into his phones -- the standard serious hearing test.

CUT TO him now before yet another doctor. Dr. Brooks. Brooks is in office at hospital perusing his results.

MICKEY
(concerned)
How's it look?

BROOKS
(showing graph)
See -- this is normal ... this range -- you dip here --

Phone rings.

BROOKS (contd)
Hello? Oh yes.
(to Mickey)
It's Dr. Abel.
(into phone)
Hi, Milt ... I'm sitting here with him right now. I have the results of the E.N.G. and it's as we discussed. The drop is unusual given his data and history.

MICKEY
E.N.G.?

BROOKS
(phone)
I would say that further tests are definitely indicated. Right ... I would do the B.S.E.R.

MICKEY
E.N.G.? B.S.E.R.?

BROOKS
(phone)
I would think about the CAT Scan.

MICKEY
A scan?

BROOKS
(with a hint of ominousness)
No, I don't either. But I'll discuss it with you later. I'll work out the details with Mr. Sachs here and I'll keep you informed step by step. Ok. Bye.
(hangs up)

MICKEY
You think I need more tests?

BROOKS
I'd like to do some Tomography. I'd like to X-ray your ear ... Don't look so apprehensive ... We have to go through this procedure to exclude certain things. It's not -- but if it ever was something serious, the earlier we knew of it, the better. How about Monday?

32 CUT TO Mickey at bank of elevators.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS
All right -- keep calm ... a brain scan ... big deal ... ha, ha ... if everybody who had a brain scan wound up with something fatal ... ha, ha ... Jesus, I'm petrified. What is a site of lesion test? They know there's a lesion on my brain? ... They just want to find out the exact site of it? I should ask more questions. It's that I'm embarrassed by my anxiety. That's silly. Go and ask him. You're going to need some reassurance or you'll never last till next week.

Mickey goes back down hall to find doctor. He passes rooms with terrible looking cases in them, reaches his doctor's room and is about to enter when he hears Dr. Brooks on phone.

BROOKS
(phone)
It could be a malignant acoustic neuroma ... but more likely from the data, I suspect a cerebellopontine angle tumor. In either case the prognosis would, in all likelihood be pretty grim ... We'll wait for the B.S.E.R. and the CAT scan.

Mickey recoils in horror.

33 CUT TO him out on street after milking take.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS
(as he wanders somnambulistically down Fifth Avenue)
Mickey ... you're dying. He suspects the worst. But he's
(MORE)

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)
got to be super cautious. He has to go this route. These tests are more to protect him from a malpractice suit. If I die, I can sue him. Ha, ha. How could I be dying? I'm functioning actively in the middle of New York City ... I'm forty-eight ... I'm connected to a million living facts ... Hey, what do you think? It only happens to other people? You're getting up there to that age -- the body starts showing weaknesses. But I'm not ready to die ... I always felt my life to be like a long train ride to the end ... but the end is at the end ... in the future ... Except that's wrong ... the train ride is not guaranteed to the end ... it can derail any second.

A derelict passes.

MICKEY"S THOUGHTS (contd)
Look at that guy ... He looks like he's at death's door. But ironically I'll be gone and he'll still be scrounging in trash cans ... 'cause of a little deadly flower pressing on my brain ... Ok, don't turn into a poet ... Pull yourself together ... You got a show to do ... A show? Are you kidding? Who cares about the show!? I'm not going in to work ... I'm supposed to do a comedy show with this on my mind? "This on my mind" -- suddenly everything has another meaning ... a deeper, more frightening meaning -- Ok, a little will power here, Mickey. A little courage. I will not react to an event before it occurs and I will not obsess.
(MORE)

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)
Psychoanalysis has taught me this if nothing else. No premature reaction -- no obsession. I will take control of myself and be a man.

CUT TO:

34 MICKEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It PANS his dark room and eventually it comes to a light patch. It is Mickey sitting up in bed, frozen -- unable to sleep. Lights on.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS
I don't want to die ... Please ... I don't want to die ... If there's anybody out there -- please. If those tests turn out positive, I don't know what I'll do. I can't face it ... I'll buy a gun and kill myself ... that would shatter my parents ... I would have to kill them too. To spare them the grief. And my aunt and uncle -- and nephew and niece -- It's a bloodbath. To be eternally non-existent ... of all the possibilities in the cosmos, why did we have to wind up with that one? Meanwhile -- you're reacting prematurely ... Cancer's not in your family -- You always run to doctors and the news is always good ... Not always ... not when I was married.

35 CUT TO Dr. Smith at his desk.

DR. SMITH
I'm sorry to say, Mr. Sachs, that you cannot have children.

CUT AROUND and WE SEE Mickey there with his then wife, Hannah.

MICKEY
Gee ...

HANNAH
There's no chance?

DR. SMITH
This doesn't mean you can't have a normal sex life, but Mr. Sachs' tests indicate that he is infertile -- small sperm volume -- and infertile.

MICKEY
Is there anything I can do? Hormones or push-ups?

DR. SMITH
I'm afraid not.

MICKEY
Could you be wrong? Should I get a second opinion?

HANNAH
This is the second opinion.

MICKEY
Then a third.

DR. SMITH
I realize this is a blow. My experience is that many very fine marriages become unstable and are destroyed because of an inability to deal with this type of problem. I hope you won't make too much of it. One can adopt children and there are artificial methods of fertilization.

36 CUT TO them out on street. She's weeping.

MICKEY
I'm sorry ...

HANNAH
You never really wanted to have a baby anyhow.

MICKEY
But I was willing.

HANNAH
I know but your heart wasn't in it.

MICKEY
What a blow. I feel like a eunuch.

HANNAH
Why should you be infertile?

MICKEY
I don't know. My father is healthy, my grandparents, uncles ...

HANNAH
Could you have ruined yourself somehow?

MICKEY
How?

HANNAH
Excessive masturbation?

MICKEY
Hannah, we're on the street. Ok? And excessively is a relative term. If anything, that would be good excersie.

HANNAH
Prostitutes? You've said you've been to bed with whores once or twice.

MICKEY
Once. In college. And I ran to the nurse. I got a complete physical. Including a cardiogram. I'm sorry ... We can adopt a child.

HANNAH
What about artificial insemination?

MICKEY
What do you mean?

HANNAH
That I get implanted. By a donor.

MICKEY
A stranger?

HANNAH
They have banks where it's kept frozen.

MICKEY
What is this? The future? Frozen kids?

HANNAH
I want to experience childbirth.

MICKEY
I know you do -- but from another guy -- you know.

HANNAH
Think about it. That's all I ask. The important thing is we can't let this affect our marriage.

37 CUT TO Mickey back in his bed, dark. Present.

MICKEY
But it did -- it destroyed it completely ... The endless discussions -- the tension. How can a guy hold out? His wife wants to experience childbirth. Can't be a monster.

38 CUT TO memory. Hannah and Mickey at their apartment. They host Mickey's then writing partner, Norman, and his wife, Carol.

CAROL
Oh it was a wonderful show. think it was the best show you two ever wrote.

NORMAN
The best show Mickey and I did was the one we got the Emmy for.

MICKEY
For sheer comedy that was a tough one to beat.

CAROL
Yes, it was funny but the one about the two Frenchmen was funny and it was warm.

NORMAN
We got that idea on our trip to Paris.

CAROL
Remember that summer in France? Hannah, you had jet lag for six straight weeks.

MICKEY
But it was fun though -- aha -- ha ...

The reminiscing and laughs have tapered off and Mickey and wife have been waiting to broach something.

HANNAH
Listen -- we have something we want to discuss.

MICKEY
Which is not easy ... and we can only do it with close friends ... It must never leave this room.

NORMAN
I'm all ears.

MICKEY
For reasons that are too complicated and embarrassing to go into -- Hannah and I cannot have children. It's my fault ... please don't ask for details ...

HANNAH
We've decided -- after much discussion -- to try with artificial insemination.

MICKEY
I'm still not sure how I feel ...

HANNAH
I didn't like the idea of going to a sperm bank and having an anonymous donor. I just wouldn't want that ...

MICKEY
We'd both feel more comfortable if it was someone we knew ... and felt warmly toward ... someone healthy and bright ...

HANNAH
And you can say, no -- because I realize it's got all kinds of implications ...

MICKEY
So there you have it -- we're asking Norman for sperm.

NORMAN
(he and wife stunned)
Gee -- I -- My first reaction -- after the initial shock -- is ... flattered that you'd ask me.

MICKEY
I'd be the father. You'd have to masturbate into a little wax container.

NORMAN
I can handle that.

HANNAH
Obviously we wouldn't have intercourse.

CAROL
My gosh ... I'll tell you the truth ... I feel a little uneasy.

HANNAH
Carol, I know it's a lot to ask --

CAROL
I feel for you ... I'm going to cry. You're asking my husband to have a child with you.

HANNAH
Don't answer right away. Think about it.

MICKEY
Excuse me.
(leaves table)

NORMAN
I've given blood before -- and clothing to the poor.

CAROL
Let's discuss it at home, Norman. It's a matter for your analyst, and mine --

NORMAN
And possibly my lawyer ...

HANNAH
I understand if you say, no -- really ... We didn't mean to spoil the evening ... we can forget it now ... move on to another subject ...

Mickey, out of sight throughout the last few speeches, is SEEN by CAMERA. He grimaces in anguish over the experience. It really kills him.

39 CUT TO him at night in his bedroom.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS
So you and my ex-partner's baby ... and now that night seems like it should have been a comedy sketch on my TV show. Funny, now it all seems so trivial. When you're dying, everything takes on a different persepctive ... You're not dying! Maybe the doctor was talking on the phone about a different patient. Some other poor soul with a brain tumor. Not me.

40 CUT TO opera -- Puccini.

CUT REVERSE. Holly and David alone in his box. They sip wine and watch.

He has obviously asked her, not April, and she's enthralled by the whole event and the man.

There is a moment of their enjoying, the opera, romantic.

CUT TO:

41 We are at the apartment of Ken and Lee. Using it as an excuse to see Lee, Elliot has brought a client to buy pictures from Ken.

The client is indeed a rock star with lots of money.

Ken is as always, annoyed and suspicious.

ELLIOT
Ken, Lee -- say hello to Dusty Frye. Dusty just bought this huge house in Southampton and he's in the process of decorating.

DUSTY
I got nothing but wall space, man. It's really weird.

ELLIOT
I told him about your work and he's very excited.

DUSTY
I bought an Andy Warhol and a Frank Stella. Very beautiful. Weird. You look at the Stella when you're high -- the colors float. It's weird.

LEE
Sounds exciting to become a collector.

DUSTY
I gotta learn more. I was never into art when I grew up.

Giving in, in spite of his constantly suppressed anger, Ken points to one wall.

KEN
You like drawings?

They all look over -- it is a nude of Lee -- very unrecognizable but languid and sexy and Elliot knows it's her.

DUSTY
It's beautiful -- but I'm talking about filling <u>a lot</u> of wall space.

KEN
I don't sell stuff by the yard.

LEE
Show him the oils -- Ken's just done a new series that I'd bet he'd love.

KEN
(to Dusty)
They're in the basement. You scared of rats?

DUSTY
Yeah, aren't you?

KEN
I'm used to them.

DUSTY
They're weird.

They go.

ELLIOT
(awkward)
How's everything?

LEE
You know -- I spoke to Hannah on the phone this morning. She said you two might go to the country for the weekend.

ELLIOT
She loves being out in the woods -- but I go nuts. It's a -- conflict.

LEE
(pause)
I have to get my teeth cleaned this week.

ELLIOT
That's nice ... I figured I'd get Ken and Dusty together. This kid's earned a trillion dollars -- he's got like six gold records.

LEE
Speaking of records, I bought that Mozart Trio you recommended and the man in the record shop showed me another that you'd love.

ELLIOT
Really? You have it?

Lee goes to get it and put it on.

ELLIOT (contd)
Love to hear it ...

LEE
Oh -- And Holly met a wonderful man who loves opera! An architect.

ELLIOT
That's nice. I'd love to see her wind up settled. She's a tense one.

LEE
(the Mozart)
Isn't that beautiful?

ELLIOT
I know this piece. It's the D Minor Quartette -- it's one of my favorites.

He sits listening to this sublime music. He stares at Lee.

ELLIOT (contd)
Er -- did you ever get around to the e.e. cummings?

LEE
Yes. He's just adorable. They have quite a large gay clientele where I get my teeth cleaned -- the hygienists now all wear gloves because of AIDS.

ELLIOT
Right ... er, did you get around to the poem on page 112?

LEE
Yes, it made me cry. It was so romantic.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS
I want so badly to kiss her. Not here, you idiot! Use your head. Find out where she gets her teeth cleaned and arrange to meet her accidentally outside. Brilliant. ... Brilliant? How many times are you going to meet her accidentally? What is she, a fool? You keep turning up in the street accidentally? Great. She wept over the poem. She must sense how I feel. But I must be patient. I can't afford a mistake or a blunder. I'm walking a tightrope. God forbid what if she's outraged and tells Hannah? ... Please ... don't even suggest that .... No ... Ask her to go to an AA meeting.
(MORE)

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS (contd)
Perfect! ... You've already laid the groundwork ... Now that's the move.

And with all this thinking, Elliot tries clumsily to kiss her.

ELLIOT
Lee, I'm in love with you.

His attempt at an embrace, being tentative, did not work and becomes clumsy and awful.

LEE
(surprised, put off, not angry, just momentarily thrown)
Elliot, don't.

Still in the clumsy motion -- perhaps he hits the tone arm of the turntable and the needle scratches unpleasantly across the Mozart disc.

ELLIOT
I'm sorry!

LEE
What are you doing?

ELLIOT
Please forgive me. I have to talk to you. There's so much I want to tell you.

LEE
Elliot --

ELLIOT
I've been in love with you for so long now and I --

And in the midst of his speech, Ken and Dusty re-enter in the throes of a quarrel.

KEN
Look, forget it. I just don't have any interest in selling anything!

DUSTY
What'd I say to offend you?

LEE
What's the problem?

KEN
I'm not interested in what your interior decorator would think, ok?

DUSTY
Well I can't commit to anything without consulting her. That's her job.

KEN
This is degrading! I'm not that hard up for a sale.

DUSTY
Ok, ok, forget it, man -- let's go, Elliot.

ELLIOT
What happened?

DUSTY
This guy flew off the handle. It's weird.

LEE
I apologize for Ken.

KEN
Hey, don't apologize for me! It's condescending.

ELLIOT
Well I didn't mean to cause you any unpleasantness. Come on, Dusty.

LEE
(to Dusty)
I'm sorry.

ELLIOT
We'll go -- we'll go -- I'm sorry it didn't work out ...

They go, WE FOLLOW them. Elliot is anguished.

DUSTY
(exiting building)
What a creep that guy is. He's a total paranoid -- Jesus -- what's the matter? You look wiped out. It's not that big a deal ... we didn't hit it off ... are you ok? You're sweating. Weird experience.

ELLIOT
I'll be ok -- I just need some fresh air. Probably something I ate. You go ahead. I'm gonna walk.

Dusty looks upon him sympathetically as he gets into his chauffeured stretch limo and pulls off, leaving a wrecked Elliot on the curb.

Elliot runs to corner phone booth. Dropping change clumsily, he dials.

CUT TO Ken only -- on phone.

KEN
Hello?

CUT BACK TO Elliot -- he quickly hangs up. He is distraught -- he wanders out of booth --

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS
(as he bumbles around, distraught)
What possessed you!? You moron! What came over you! How could you blurt it out like that -- with Ken right there -- don't you have any self-control!? You were going to ask about the AA meeting! -- What made you grab her!?

And now, in the street, he comes upon Lee who has apparently left the house and is seeking him out.

LEE
There you are -- I was looking for you.

ELLIOT
Look, I apologize -- I'm sorry -- I'm so mixed up.

LEE
(upset)
How do you expect me to react to such a thing?

ELLIOT
I know, I know, I'm just in love with you.

LEE
Don't say those words.

ELLIOT
I'm sorry. I know it's terrible.

LEE
You know the situation.

ELLIOT
I know -- I realize ...

LEE
What do you expect me to say?

ELLIOT
Hannah and I are in the last stages.

LEE
She's never mentioned any problems, and we're very close.

ELLIOT
It's so sad -- she's crazy about me and somewhat along the line, I've fallen out of love with her.

LEE
Not because of me, I hope.

ELLIOT
No -- no -- no -- well yes. I love you.

LEE
I don't want to be the cause --

ELLIOT
It was inevitable I would break up with Hannah anyway.

LEE
Why?

ELLIOT
A million reasons.

LEE
Not over me.

ELLIOT
We're grown in different directions.

LEE
Poor Hannah.

ELLIOT
And what about you? Do you share any of my feelings? Or is this just an unpleasant embarrassment to you?

LEE
I can't say anything.

ELLIOT
Please -- I'm trying to simplify things, not complicate them. Don't confuse me by not being candid.

LEE
Yes, I have certain feelings for you but don't make me say anymore.

ELLIOT
Ok -- you've said enough. The responsibility is mine now. I'll work things out.

LEE
Don't do anything on my behalf ... I live with Ken -- and Hannah and I are close.

ELLIOT
But you do care about me?

LEE
Please, Elliot -- I can't be a party to this ... Suddenly I feel wracked with guilt over talking to you on the street ...

ELLIOT
You're guilty because you feel the same way.

LEE
Please, I have to get my teeth cleaned. Oh, that's tomorrow ... Goodbye.

She runs back to her building, leaving Elliot.

ELLIOT
(looking after her, breathing hard)
I have my answer, I have my answer! I'm walking on air!

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

42 SHOT of taxi pulling up. Hannah runs out. She runs into building.

43 CUT TO her entering her parents' apartment. Her mom is dead drunk, house messy, father distraught.

HANNAH
Oh, Mom, not again.

EVAN
I won't stand for it! I can't go on like this!

NORMA
I'm ok, I'm ok ...

EVAN
Don't say you're ok. You promise and promise ... it's all lies.

HANNAH
Don't make it worse. C'mon, Mom, get some black coffee. What triggered it?

NORMA
Nothing.

EVAN
I know why ... don't think you're fooling me. We were doing a commercial for the mayor's office and there was a good-looking, young, advertising man and your mother was throwing herself at him in a disgusting way and when she realized she was too old to seduce him, that he was just embarrassed by her --

NORMA
Liar! Liar!

EVAN
So at lunch she got drunker and drunker and turned into Joan Collins.

NORMA
You're such a nonentity that I have to drink to be able to find you in the room.

EVAN
You should wear break-away clothes like the basketball players.

NORMA
Go to hell.

HANNAH
Stop it!

EVAN
She'd sleep with a snake if you held its head.

HANNAH
You've had a bit much to drink too.

EVAN
Naturally she threw up -- They postponed the commercial. I wanted to crawl under the table.

NORMA
You should live under the table.

HANNAH
Will you both stop it.

NORMA
My whole life I have to suffer insults from this non-person. This haircut that passes for a man ... who couldn't support us ... so you had to work for us. Fortunately we had a talented daughter.

EVAN
I only hope she's mine. With you as her mother she could be anyone's in Actors' Equity.

NORMA
She's talented, so it's unlikely she's yours.

HANNAH
Dad, go in the other room. I'll take care of her.

EVAN
(going)
You never know when she's going to fall off the wagon and humiliate everyone.

HANNAH
(alone with her mother)
Drink this ... take these ... Mother, you're awful. You probably were flirting.

NORMA
I joke around and he gets angry. Because I get the attention. He's gotten sourer as he's gotten older and I've tried to keep young at heart.

HANNAH
You promised to stay on the wagon.

NORMA
The opportunities I gave up in my life because of that man.
(MORE)

NORMA (contd)
He ruined me with his ego and his philandering and his demands and his mediocrity.

HANNAH
Ok, stop being dramatic.

NORMA
He's the one that laid every ingenue in stock.

HANNAH
Ok -- ok ...

NORMA
They wanted me for screen tests but I knew he'd flounder around out there ... with his expensive haircuts and clothes -- and his deep voice ... he was all show. How's he going to act if there's nothing inside to bring out.

HANNAH'S THOUGHTS
She was so beautiful at one time -- and he was so dashing ... Both of them full of promise and hopes that never materialized ... and the fights and constant infidelities to prove themselves ... and blaming each other ... it's so sad. They preened on the rituals of having us kids but raising us didn't interest them much. No time for that boring stuff. Lee's right when she says they were selfish. But I forgive them. They didn't know anything else. They were two beautiful flowers wilted by their own mediocrity. Although I had it better than Holly and Lee. By the time they came Mom was just an alcoholic ... they have a lot of hostility to her ... But one can't dwell on that or life is too painful.

NORMA
It's very sad when you get old, Hannah.

HANNAH
You're not old.

NORMA
Everything is behind you.

HANNAH
You have a husband and children that all love you.

NORMA
I know you do. I hope Holly and Lee don't think too badly of me.

HANNAH
They adore you.

NORMA
But you were always my favorite. You have a certain spark.

44 CUT TO Lee. Alone by river or some such place. She's staring out to water. She has Elliot's poem. She is in a pensive, conflicted, romantic mood.

LEE'S THOUGHTS
I can't believe it. He chooses me over Hannah. And I did nothing to seduce him in any way. Though I guess I was a little flirtatious with him. But it's not my fault. He's fallen out of love with her. Funny -- when Hannah first introduced me to him, I was unimpressed. Now I think that with him my life would be complete. I'd have children with Elliot. I would. Do I really care about college courses at Columbia? To what end? I'm crazy about him.

She walks and we go with her a bit to play her mood.

45 CUT TO a row in the theatre that night. Hannah and Elliot have tickets and watch something. We hear only a scene from a classic, perhaps Shakespeare or Strindberg -- whatever -- but we choose a scene that is between man and woman and while it is not right on the nose, is in the ballpark along with Elliot's mental state.

We play his face and he's a man deep in thought, anguish, conflict, perspiration emerges on his brow and after a period of time, he faints.

There is an ad-lib small commotion around him. People say, "Get a doctor."
"Give him some air."
"This man's passed out."

HANNAH
Elliot! Oh my god! Get a doctor!

ELLIOT
(coming up a bit but weakly)
I'm ok -- I'm ok ...

HANNAH
Don't move.

ELLIOT
No -- I'm ok ... let's just get to the fresh air ...

HANNAH
Do you feel chest pains? Anything?

ELLIOT
No -- no -- just lost my breath ... I'll be fine ... thank you ... excuse me ... excuse me ...

She helps him out of aisle and WE CUT TO:

Mickey at the hospital.

46 We do a MONTAGE of something like, if not precisely, a B.S.E.R. and/or CAT scan. This is done deliberately with the attending doctors and assistants looking not too thrilled as the steps progress.

CUT TO him receiving a brain scan.

47 CUT TO him sitting in the office at the hospital waiting for the results.

Mickey is not enjoying this at all.

Presently Dr. Adams enters with X-rays and sheaf of charts and a grim face.

DR. ADAMS
Mr. Sachs, I'm afraid the news is not good.

Mickey reacts in quiet anguish. The doctor posts the X-rays.

DR. ADAMS (contd)
If I can point out exactly where the tumor is and why we feel surgery would be of no use ...

Mickey is too ravished to speak, stunned.

(CONTINUED)

DR. ADAMS (contd)
See, it's become quite large without being detected. It's very unusual. See this little white area pressing on the cerebellum ...

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS
(as doctor rants professionally)
It's over.
I'm face to face with eternity.
Not later -- but now ...
I'm so frightened I can't move -- or speak -- or breathe --

Now WE CUT AROUND from Mickey's face where WE'VE HELD for these thoughts and Dr. Adams enters buoyantly.

DR. ADAMS
Well -- you're just fine -- stop looking so anxious.

(The first one was just imagined.)

DR. ADAMS (contd)
(re: X-rays)
There's nothing here at all ... and your tests are all fine. I must admit I was concerned, given your symptoms ... Why you've had this hearing loss in one ear -- I guess we'll never really know but it's certainly not anything serious at all. I'm very relieved.

48 Bang! WE CUT TO Mickey outside the hospital and he's in a state of relief supreme.

He's walking on Fifth Avenue. He's smelling the air, the leaves. He's looking at people, children, smells a vendor's frankfurters.

49 CUT TO him on park bench. He just stares.

He looks upward to heaven. He walks, he sits. Sunlight coming through the treetops, etc.

Maybe a street saxophonist -- the music is music to his ears.

50 CUT TO Larry and Gail in Mickey's office at Thirty Rock.

LARRY
What do you mean you're quitting?

CUT AROUND and Mickey is gathering a few items.

MICKEY
I'm finished, I'm through, I quit.

GAIL
But why? We need you -- the show was in chaos the last two weeks.

LARRY
And the network didn't replace you -- So that's a vote of confidence.

MICKEY
Let me tell you something: For the last ten days I was convinced I was dying -- I thought I had a brain tumor -- and the doctors were not reassuring ... ok? ... And I was scared -- but I mean scared not like when the head of programming calls you in because the show stinks -- I mean scared in a different way.
And I had to sleep with the light on -- when I could sleep at all ... And I'd lay there knowing my time had come -- and I was going to vanish forever -- just disappear and not exist ... And it's not a fun thought ... in fact it's very horrible ... And no matter how much you try to rationalize it, something in your blood and bones rebels against the idea -- let's say I experienced panic -- to put it mildly ... ok?
And you're sort of thrust into a different reality -- suddenly only life and death is real and all the daily stuff I'm used to is nothing -- it's not real -- it's man-made -- the show, the sponsor, my accountant, my Mercedes, the Americans and Russians -- it's all nothing -- it's just silly. You're just scared out of your mind and you want to be protected. You don't understand what life is all about -- just that you're gonna be snuffed out.
Ok -- then suddenly, it turns out -- I'm not dying! It's not a tumor
(MORE)

MICKEY (contd)
... And I'm running down Fifth Avenue and everything smells great and everyone looks great -- trees, flowers, I just want to touch things ...
And I happen to wander into the Metropolitan Museum ...

51 CUT INTO Met Museum and suit action to word.

MICKEY (contd)
... and I'm drinking in all the paintings and the colors and I come across the statue of The Thinker -- and he's sitting there thinking -- and I'm thinking -- and I'm wondering what he's thinking about and then it hits me -- I know what he's thinking -- he's thinking what I'm thinking ... that all the doctors gave me was a postponement --

52 CUT BACK TO Mickey live, continuing tale.

MICKEY (contd)
I'm not dying <u>now</u> -- but eventually I'm going to be in that position of last week. Right? You following this? -- There's gonna be a time when I'm facing that horrible thing again and sooner or later -- it'll be real ... And if that's so, then nothing has any meaning ... this is all ephemeral nonsense ... Life is like a giant, "So what" -- There's another reality that lets itself be seen now and then and it's a scary one -- but that's the one I want to find out about ... Because unless I can deal with this, I'm not going to have a decent moment in life ... And don't tell me to put it out of my mind ... I never can again. I'm a changed person. Well -- I hope I've cheered up your day ... Good luck.

53 CUT TO Mickey walking in the street, having quit. WE FOLLOW him as he walks rapidly, a man with questions on his mind.

Mickey observes faces. A pregnant woman -- a blind man ... a very old man ...

CAMERA FOLLOWS him. Music. He passes a hotel, CAMERA LEAVES HIM AND PANS UP TO higher floor.

54 CUT inside. Elliot in a hotel room. Presently there is a knock on door. He opens it, it is Lee. He lets her in.

ELLIOT
(looks at watch)
I thought you weren't coming.

LEE
I almost didn't.

ELLIOT
Lee --

LEE
I didn't sleep all night.

ELLIOT
No -- I'm sure ...

LEE
What are we doing? Meeting in a hotel room? It's terrible, isn't it?

ELLIOT
I didn't know where else I could invite you without a risk.

LEE
I promised myself I wouldn't let this happen till you were living alone. I was so torn when you called.

ELLIOT
I wanted to call everyday since I told you how I felt. I resisted so many times ... Don't think badly of me ... this is not an easy situation.

LEE
I know it's not.

They kiss and it is now passionate and leads step by clumsy step to sex. There should be one or two physical obstacles but eventually they fall behind bed on floor or some out-of-sight spot.

After a moment of passion WE CUT TO the same room later. Now the lights are out and rain cascades down the window-pane. Lee and Elliot are in bed. They are relaxed. He is reading her poetry.

Elliot reads aloud to Lee from e.e. cummings or the like.

LEE
It's beautiful.

ELLIOT
You're beautiful.

LEE
No one in my life has ever read to me.

Kiss -- back to sex ...

LEE (contd)
I love you so much. What are we going to do?

ELLIOT
Don't speak -- don't speak ... This afternoon just belongs to the two of us.

More passion.

55 CUT TO later. Lee walking home, blissed out.

She enters her house. Ken is fixing a sandwich, having been watching tv with contempt.

KEN
You're late.

LEE
Lucy and I kept talking ... I didn't realize how late it got.

KEN
You missed a very dull show about Auschwitz. More gruesome film clips and puzzled intellectuals declaring their mystification over systematic murder of millions. The reason they can never answer the question: how could it possibly happen? is that it's the wrong question. Given what people are, the question is: why doesn't it happen more often? Of course it does in subtler forms.

LEE
I have a little headache from this weather.

KEN
It's been ages since I sat in front of the TV just changing channels to find something. You see the whole culture ... Nazis, deodorant salesmen, comedians and wrestlers who scream their lines at the camera. On one cable channel you have a little pornography where the participants are such morons you never want to have sex again. Then you got your Fundamentalist clergymen telling the poor suckers that watch them to send in money -- money, money, money -- They don't really care about protecting the unborn with their anti-abortion stance. They simply want to be obeyed. If Christ came back and saw those guys on TV hustling in his name, he'd never stop throwing up. Health shows, talk shows, beautify contests, science made popular -- football -- the entire cesspool of

(MORE)

KEN (contd)
contemporary values. I gotta move to a Greek Island and wash myself in the Mediterranean.

LEE
Why don't you relax, Ken. I said I had a headache.

KEN
Y'know, you've been very nervous lately.

LEE
Well I just can't take this anymore.

KEN
I'm just trying to complete an eudcation I started on you five years ago.

LEE
I'm not your pupil. I was but I'm not.

KEN
When you leave the nest I just want you to be ready to face the real world.

LEE
Ken, we have to make some changes.

KEN
Like what?

LEE
You know what. I'm suffocating.

KEN
Are we going to have this conversation again?

LEE
Ken -- I want to get my own place.

KEN
Why?

LEE
Because I have to.

KEN
What are you going to use for money?

LEE
I don't know. I thought of moving in with Holly for awhile.

KEN
I always told you, you would leave me but does it have to be now?

LEE
Maybe it'll only be temporary but I have to try.

KEN
(embracing her)
Lee, you're my whole world -- I want you to --
(notices some intangible)
Jesus -- Have you been kissed tonight?

LEE
No.

KEN
Yes you have. You've been with someone.

LEE
Stop accusing me.

KEN
I'm too smart, Lee -- you can't fool me -- you're turning all red.

LEE
(bursts into tears)
Leave me alone!

KEN
Oh Christ -- what's wrong with you?

LEE
I'm sorry!

KEN
Couldn't you say something!? You have to slither around behind my back?

LEE
I'm saying it now!

KEN
You've met someone else?

LEE
Yes ... But you know this was going to happen sooner or later. I can't live like this.

KEN
Who is it?

LEE
Someone I met.

KEN
Who? Where'd you meet him?

LEE
What's the difference!? I have to move out!

KEN
You're my only connection to the world.

LEE
I can't have that responsibility. It's not fair. I want a less complicated life. I want a husband and maybe a child before it's too late.

KEN
Oh Jesus --
(he weeps now)

LEE
I don't even know what I want. What do you get out of me? It's not sexual anymore -- it's not intellectual -- you're much superior to me in every way ...

KEN
(turns on her, grabbing her in fury)
Please don't patronize me or I'll kill you!

They struggle a bit.

KEN (contd)
I should have married you -- years ago -- when you wanted to -- when we first met.

LEE
I was a kid. I never had a long affair with anyone. I was turning into a drunk. And you were so impressive. I was so desperate to learn and be taken care of. But you were wise enough not to take me seriously when I wanted to legalize it forever.

KEN
I told you one day you would leave me for a younger man.

56 CUT TO Elliot and Hannah awake in bed, lights on. They both read innocently their respective books.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS
What passion tonight with Lee. She's a volcano. It was a totally fulfilling experience ... just as erotic as I dreamed it would be ... And now I feel very good and cozy laying in bed here next to Hannah ... There's something very lovely and real about Hannah ... She gives me a very deep feeling of being part of something ... She's a wonderful woman and I betrayed her. She came into my empty life and changed it and I paid her back by banging her sister in a hotel room. I feel so miserable. I did such a cruel and shallow thing. It's just crazy. Am I looking to wreck lives? I want to call Lee now and tell her what we did was crazy. Crazy! ... It can't ever happen again. I value Hannah too much. Hannah's my person. I can't betray her! Oh god!
(getting out of bed)

HANNAH
Where you going?

ELLIOT
Gotta get a phone number from my desk. I forgot to call Mel Kaufman.

HANNAH
It's so late.

ELLIOT
I know. I can't believe I forgot.
(runs to remote room)

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS
What if he answers. I'll hang up. I'll tell her we can't communicate until I terminate my marriage. It's immoral. Then time will pass -- I won't call. She'll get the idea. I must stop this before it gets too deep. I'd rather hurt Lee a little than destroy Hannah! It's one-thirty. She'll never be able to have a conversation with me with him around. I'm getting hysterical. I'll call first thing in the morning. I'll call at six. Ken jogs at six. She'll be alone. I'll call and nip it in the bud.

Suddenly the phone rings and Elliot jumps with fright!

He picks it up.

ELLIOT
Hello?!
(calls to Hannah)
I got it -- I got it -- I got it!
... Hello? -- Mel? ...

57 CUT TO Lee alone in her place on phone.

LEE
(on phone)
I'd have hung up if you didn't answer -- and I realize I should never do this and I won't again -- but I just had to tell you -- I feel very close to you. Very, very close. Goodnight.

58 CUT TO Elliot hanging up ... He stares forward in confusion.

59 CUT TO Mickey wandering city ... Park bench.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS
I can't work ... I just wander the streets ... I don't see the point of anything ... All these people ... jogging ... Trying to stay young ... stay healthy ...
(MORE)

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)
hold back the inevitable ... My Uncle Phil dropped dead playing squash ... the doctor suggested it for his health. Two weeks later the doctor dropped dead playing squash. Must give up my membership at the squash club ...

60 CUT TO him before window of health food store ...

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)
Natural, organic, Vitamin C. Right. Organically raised chicken, organically caught fish ...

A near-death jogger runs by with weights.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)
Lookit this guy ... he's jogging with the hundred dollar sneakers and carrying the hand weights. He'll be dead by morning.

61 CUT TO mummies at Met Museum.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)
(surveying a sarcophagus)
Poor kings buried with their possessions so in the after-life they'd have their favorite chair ... servants buried alive with them so they could serve ... no unions in those days ...

62 SHOT of Mickey before statue of The Thinker again.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)
Human life is so unexplainable ... so fragile ... one egg and one sperm out of millions and millions ... one egg and one sperm.

CUT TO memory.

63 Mickey and Hannah. She is largely pregnant. Gathering includes relatives and Norman and his wife.

NORMA
If it's a girl, I hope it resembles Hannah. If it's a boy, I also hope it resembles Hannah.
(to Mickey)
No hard feelings. I'm prejudiced.

EVAN
(to Mickey)
You must be very happy.

MICKEY
(half heartedly accepting the praise)
Er ... yeah ...

HOLLY
And you're so big.

HOWARD (HOLLY'S GUY)
Maybe it's twins ...
(to Mickey with a nudge)
You eat that Ginseng I gave you, it really puts lead in your pencil.

Mickey glances over to Norman across the room.

EVAN
(to Norman)
You think it'll take after Hannah or Mickey?

LEE
(trying it out)
Aunt Lee. Aunt Lee's Pancakes. Aunt Lee's Salad Dressing. Aunt Lee's Old Fashioned Home Fries.

HOLLY
Aunt Holly's Angel Dust.

NORMA
Do they still feed them those dreadful little jars of strained carrots?

HANNAH
(aside to Mickey)
Have you thought of a name?

MICKEY
Arty. It's short for artificial.

64 CUT TO Mickey going up steps of Public Library.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS
Now I have a daughter except I have no daughter. It's Norman and Hannah's. Is it fair to bring someone into the world? As the French Existentialists say -- when we're born, we're immediately condemned to death. Nice trick to play on the kid.

65 CUT TO SHOT of Mickey poring over the philosophers.

He sits surrounded by open tomes --

One in his hands reads: Schopenhauer.

MICKEY
(reads)
The individual is simply the will to live personified. Although --
(picking up another book)
Hume says we're only a bundle of perceptions ... This is not helping me ...
(lifts third book)
On the other hand, Spinoza figured the inner nature of the world is God ... How does he know? These guys all think they figured it out ... And all those materialists believed in total annihilation after death ... Like the stoics ... what the hell did the stoics know ... sat around in white robes and took public baths ... I'm gonna listen to guys who bathe together? ... I mean common science ... the conservation of matter ... it's indestructible ...
(MORE)

MICKEY (contd)
(waving Schopenhauer)
Schopenhauer said the will is imperishable ... But the universe itself is of limited duration ... so you got the will and no universe ... where do you eat? Not according to Nietzche ... Eternal recurrence ... everything is going to happen over and over exactly as it occurs ... which means I will have to sit through the Ice Capades again! Not worth it ...

66 CUT outside Library. Exiting.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS
All those philosophers. They're real deep when you're a student but when you're facing death -- how shall I put it? -- Mere words suck.

He notices a bar or cafe -- let's say Joe's Bar.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)
Joe's Bar ... Remember that day?

67 CUT TO memory. Hannah and Mickey seated in bar.

HANNAH
(very nicely)
I met a wonderful man and we're going to get married. I wanted you to know. I know sometimes an ex-spouse gets depressed -- but I'll always be someone you can count on.

MICKEY
What's he do?

HANNAH
Business manager. He handles finances for various personalities -- but I'm encouraging him to produce.

MICKEY
It is a funny feeling. We swore eternal love -- now it's you and him ... the heart is a very nasty little muscle ...

HANNAH
How 'bout you? You have anybody?

MICKEY
Not at the moment.

HANNAH
I'd love to see you settled.

MICKEY
Feeling guilty, right? Don't. I been very busy. Since Norman and I split, I've had my hands full. Trying to produce.

HANNAH
What about Holly?

MICKEY
Your sister, Holly?

HANNAH
You always thought she was fascinating.

MICKEY
She is.

HANNAH
She's been in the doldrums. She broke up with her husband. You'd probably both have a nice time.

68 CUT TO Holly and Mickey on date. He's seated next to speaker at rock cafe. FIRST SHOT is rock act, before WE REVEAL Mickey and Holly.

MICKEY (VO)
How wrong you were, Hannah -- what a disaster.

HOLLY
Why you making those faces?

MICKEY
How can you stand this?

HOLLY
You're witnessing genius.

MICKEY
My ears are experiencing a meltdown! ... I'm liable to go deaf someday.

HOLLY
Can't you feel the energy? It's tangible energy. The room is alive with positive vibrations.

MICKEY
My right ear hurts and I think the group is capable of performing a human sacrifice.

HOLLY
(re: coke)
You want some?

MICKEY
If you have any more of that you're going to develop a third nostril.

69 CUT TO them later on street.

HOLLY
I like songs about extra-terrestrial life, don't you?

MICKEY
Not when they're sung by extra-terrestrials.

HOLLY
I can't communicate with you. I never realized you were so tight-assed.

MICKEY
Hannah likes good music, Lee likes good music. How'd you stray?

HOLLY
I'm my own person.

MICKEY
Lemme take you to hear something nice, ok?

HOLLY
It's getting late.

MICKEY
C'mon, don't be angry.

HOLLY
You don't believe in ESP, you don't like rock music, you won't get high ... it's like I'm dating Cardinal Cooke.

70 CUT inside Carlyle ... Bobby Short doing Cole Porter. Square crowd, good music. Mickey eagerly looks to Holly's reaction.

71 CUT TO them outside Holly's door.

HOLLY
(sarcastic)
Thanks for a swell time.

MICKEY
(angry)
If you didn't like it, you didn't like it, but you didn't have to talk so loud while he was singing.

HOLLY
I was so bored.

MICKEY
You don't deserve Cole Porter, you should stay with your extra-terrestrial rock.

HOLLY
At least I'm open to new concepts.

MICKEY
And you didn't have to snort cocaine at the table. You could've at least gone into the bathroom.

HOLLY
That crowd wouldn't know the difference -- they're embalmed.

MICKEY
I'm glad Hannah got us together. She has such wonderful instincts when it comes to people.

HOLLY
I'm sorry it didn't work out. It was probably me. I've been in a depressed mood lately. 'Bye.

MICKEY (VO)
(as he walks down block from her house)
Yes, it was quite an evening. You neglected to tell me she was going through a very bad phase.
(MORE)

71 CONTD

MICKEY (VO contd)
Still in love with her ex-husband and heavily on drugs. Talk about oil and water. Humpf.

CUT TO:

72 PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Elliot on phone.

ELLIOT
(on phone)
Please, I have the whole afternoon free.

CUT TO:

LEE
(on phone)
I'm not just going to sleep with my sister's husband. What do you think I am? We said we weren't going to have an affair.

CUT TO:

ELLIOT
(on phone)
I'm in the process of working things out. I'm looking to do it as painlessly as possible, so of course it takes more time than if I just cut the cord.

CUT TO:

LEE
(on phone)
I don't want to hear about you and Hannah. That's your own business. If you truly decide your marriage is over and you become free, call me and we'll see what's happening.

CUT TO:

ELLIOT
(on phone)
I miss you, I try to resist calling but I'm just too crazy about you. I'm going nuts.

CUT TO:

LEE
(on phone)
But we said we wouldn't sneak around and carry on an affair. I can't do that to my sister. I have bad dreams about Hannah already and I know you don't want to do anything sleazy either. Yes ... yes ... of course I think about you ... Elliot, please ... Ok, ok -- but it has to be some very out of the way spot and not a hotel room.

73 CUT TO Hannah and Holly shopping. Obviously Hannah is helping Holly pick out something for her at some store.

WE SEE it with no dialogue for a moment or just ad libs of "yes?" "no -- not you," and that kind of stuff.

HOLLY
How about this?

HANNAH
It's a perfect color for you.

HOLLY
Did you ever think you'd be helping me buy something to wear to the opera?

HANNAH
I'm so happy for you. I can't wait to meet him.

HOLLY
He's married -- and his wife's in and out of institutions -- she's schizophrenic ... and sometimes she's terrific and then she breaks down. And he has a sweet daughter and when she goes to college next year he's going to split permanently with his wife. He's really paid his dues. But she helped put him through architecture school.

HANNAH
You learned this all on one date?

HOLLY
I think he's been dying to open up. It's so sad. Now what should I wear to my audition. I'm singing for
(MORE)

HOLLY (contd)
Joe Papp down at the Public.
Of course I'll never get it.

HANNAH
Singing?

HOLLY
Can you believe it?

HANNAH
Really?

HOLLY
Why not? What have I got to lose?

HANNAH
Nothing. I didn't know you sang.

HOLLY
Why? You think everyone in musicals sing so well?

HANNAH
No, but they sing ...

HOLLY
Well don't say it that way. My confidence is not my strong point. I think I can fake my way through a song.

HANNAH
Uh-huh ...

HOLLY
Why? ... You don't think it's realistic?

HANNAH
No, I just don't want you to put yourself in a position where you can get discouraged. You know you take every rejection as confirmation you have no talent.

HOLLY
Well maybe I'll get it.

HANNAH
I hope.

HOLLY
(pause)
Boy, you really know how to cut me down.

HANNAH
Don't be so high-strung. Can't I say anything?

HOLLY
I sing a little. For Chrissake, you've heard me sing!

HANNAH
Ok -- Hey, what happened? We were having a nice time and in one second we went to bad feelings.

HOLLY
Nobody else can do that to me but you. I don't know why?

HANNAH
Come on -- everything's going your way.

HOLLY
(snapping to)
You're right. I'm happy. Why must I let my insecurity always spoil everything? So -- aren't you going to get anything?

HANNAH
We're here to shop for you.

Happily they resolve their flare-up.

74 CUT TO waterfront, isolated. Elliot is doing it to sister Lee in some overt but discreetly cinematic fashion. They are in the throes of lovemaking, passion; let's say he's doing it from behind her and enough clothes are on to keep me happy.

Obviously they have found some isolated niche near the docks. They consummate their lust.

Huffing and puffing, they button up or whatever.

LEE
This is terrible -- we're like two animals.

ELLIOT
(puffing, out of breath)
You get me so excited.

LEE
I'm mad -- I'm god damn angry.

ELLIOT
Oh come on --

LEE
No! It's not right! You said we wouldn't do this!

ELLIOT
Then when I see you --

LEE
That's why we can't see each other. Neither of us has any self-control.

ELLIOT
Because I have such deep feelings for you.

LEE
So do I, but it's wrong. Look at us. We're sneaking around on the docks, making love in an alley.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTD

ELLIOT
It was kind of sexy.

LEE
It was very sexy but that's not enough. I can't do this to Hannah and I want more for myself. Now I feel rotten -- we can't lay around or sit over dinner or do all the things you want to do with someone you care about.

ELLIOT
I can't just chop Hannah off abruptly like that. It'll crush her. I'm not the kind of person that can wreck another human for his own instant gratification. I'm trying to lower the boom gradually but it requires a little finesse ... if that takes time, I'm sorry.

LEE
You're not doing Hannah any greater kindness by living with her and deceiving her.

ELLIOT
You make it sound like we do this regularly. It's one time -- and the hotel once. Apart from that we're like phone friends. So once in a great while we weaken ... A lot of people would have rented a little apartment already.

LEE
I didn't say we did it all the time.

ELLIOT
When you're not around I daydream of you in the most pornographic situations with me.

LEE
I've never made love with anyone like I do with you.

ELLIOT
(embracing her)
Because there's real feelings. Real feelings are everything.

He kisses her ... and they go at it again ...

75 CUT TO that night. Elliot and Hannah home in their apartment. He is antsy. She's normal.

HANNAH
(doing something with kid)
It's a wonderful camera, Jimmy, and you can take pictures underwater ...

DAISY
Can I try it?

HANNAH
When we go to the country. In the lake. It'll be fun.

Kids scramble off.

ELLIOT
Are you going to sew all night?

HANNAH
I don't have to.

ELLIOT
It's so domestic ... it makes me nervous.

HANNAH
Are you in a bad mood?

ELLIOT
(pacing)
I din't know, I'm antsy.

HANNAH
I know ... you were very curt with me at dinner tonight.

ELLIOT
Was I?

HANNAH
A little insulting but I chose to let it pass.

ELLIOT
I didn't mean to be insulting.

HANNAH
Then, when I brought up the idea of having a baby you kind of jumped down my throat.

75 CONTD

ELLIOT
Well I don't think it's a very good idea.

HANNAH
Why not?

ELLIOT
Because it's the last thing in the world we need right now.

HANNAH
Why do you say that? Is something wrong?

ELLIOT
I don't know.

HANNAH
Tell me. Should I be worried?

ELLIOT
You've got three children.

HANNAH
I want one with you.

ELLIOT
We should wait till things settle.

HANNAH
What are you talking about? We've been married four years. How settled can they be?

ELLIOT
I don't know. There are still certain aspects of my life that I'm not totally comfortable with.

HANNAH
I can tell. These past weeks you haven't been yourself. Have I done something?

ELLIOT
You might ask me, what?

HANNAH
What?

ELLIOT
Y'know you have some very set plans about how you want your
(MORE)

ELLIOT (contd)
life structured ... the house, the kids, certain schools, home in Connecticut. It's all very preconceived ...

HANNAH
I thought you needed that. You were the one who said your life was chaotic before we met.

ELLIOT
I know but there's got to be some give and take. Oh listen, I don't know what the hell I'm talking about.

HANNAH
Are you angry with me?

ELLIOT
No.

HANNAH
Are you disenchanted by our marriage?

ELLIOT
I didn't say that.

HANNAH
Are you in love with someone else?

ELLIOT
God -- what is this? The Gestapo? No.

HANNAH
What aren't you telling me?

ELLIOT
What kind of interrogation -- Suppose I said, yes, I'm disenchanted -- or I'm in love with someone else --

HANNAH
Are you?

ELLIOT
No. But you ask those awful questions. My god, it's like you want me to say yes.

HANNAH
Of course not. I'd be destroyed.

ELLIOT
Yeah -- well -- gimme a break ...

HANNAH
Something's bothering you.

ELLIOT
Maybe I don't like living in New York -- maybe I don't want a big family -- and boring weekends in the woods.

HANNAH
Are they boring? We're together. I didn't think they were boring.

Her eyes begin to well up with tears.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS
For Chrissake, stop torturing her ... tell her you want out and get it over with ... you're in love with her sister ... you didn't do it on purpose. These things happen ...

HANNAH
I looked forward to those weekends in the country. I thought it brought us closer together.

ELLIOT
It did. I've just been so tense lately. It's my work -- then I take it out on you.

HANNAH
(weepy)
Can I help you? ... If you're suffering over something -- share it with me.

ELLIOT
Hannah, you know I love you ... Jesus ... I should have my head examined ... I don't deserve you.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS
You idiot. You try to develop a theme of discontent so you can prepare her for a break and you wind up hurting her and having to insist you love her twice as much. I don't know what I want. I want to be hit by a car is what I want.

76 CUT TO singing audition for a Broadway musical.

Holly is finishing off a song best she can. When it's over they thank her and she scurries offstage where there are other girls waiting to audition, including April.

HOLLY
They're very nice but I did so lousy. Hannah was right -- I'm not a singer.

APRIL
I'm the embarrassing one.

HOLLY
You'll be great.

STAGE MANAGER
April Knox.

77 CUT TO April singing. We let her sing a few lines and
78 CUT TO the two girls walking down the street.

The above was to both show the girls' lives continuing and again punctuate the talk scenes with a musical interlude.

HOLLY
(as they walk)
Who knows. You may be surprised.

APRIL
Thank god we have a party to cater this week. I'm really low on money.

HOLLY
We have Mr. Morris Levine's eightieth birthday on Riverside Drive -- or Riverside Memorial Chapel, depending on his health.

APRIL
Oh listen -- David called me up.

HOLLY
What?

APRIL
David asked me if I'd go to the opera with him this Friday. I didn't know what to say.

HOLLY
You're joking.

APRIL
No -- he phoned late last night.

HOLLY
I -- I'm very surprised.

APRIL
He wants to take me to see Rigoletto.

HOLLY
And -- you -- you're going?

APRIL
Well I didn't know what to say ... first I said, no, but then he pressed it. He said he took you once and he very much wanted to invite me.

HOLLY
But I'm seeing him.

APRIL
That's what I said but he felt it was something he really wanted to do.

HOLLY
Gee ... I'm kind of taken aback.

APRIL
It's only an evening at the opera. Did I do wrong in accepting?

79 CUT TO Father Flynn in his rectory office.

FATHER FLYNN
Now why do you think you'd like to convert to Catholicism?

CUT AROUND TO Mickey who sits there.

MICKEY
Because I need something to believe in -- otherwise life is meaningless.

FLYNN
But why Catholicism?

MICKEY
From what I know it's a very strong religion -- very structured and very beautiful.

FLYNN
And what about the faith you were raised in?

MICKEY
I don't know -- maybe because it was beaten into me by my parents --

80 CUT TO synagogue PAN suiting action to words --

MICKEY (VO)
-- it never had any special meaning for me -- it was always old, bearded men who prayed in a foreign language ...

SHOT of his rabbi -- action to word.

MICKEY (VO contd)
And my rabbi never seemed to me to have any special grasp of life ... He was always sneaking peppermints ... And mostly you couldn't turn on the lights on Saturday or eat bacon which I love to this day.

81 CUT BACK TO Mickey live.

MICKEY
And I like Christmas and Easter's the best because I need the promise of an afterlife ... I can't bear the thought that this is it ... that there isn't anything more ... and the Jews are not big on an afterlife. They're not a merry people.

FLYNN
So at the moment you don't believe in God?

MICKEY
No. And I want to. I'm willing to dye Easter eggs if it works. I want some evidence -- a miracle -- even a little miracle. I want so badly to believe in God. Otherwise I'm not sure it's worth it to go on living.

FLYNN
It means making a very big leap.

MICKEY
Can you help me?

FLYNN
Often skeptics make the best Catholics.

82 CUT TO Mickey with his parents. His mother is screaming, having heard the news. She is inconsolable.

MOTHER
Ohhh -- no -- no -- please ... oh please ... I can't breathe ... no, no ... please ... oh god ... why? ... Oh god ...

MICKEY
For God's sake, I thought you'd be happy.

FATHER
How could we be happy?

MICKEY
Because after not taking the idea of God very seriously my whole life I've decided to try something.

FATHER
But Catholicism? Why not your own people?

MICKEY
I don't know -- I got off on a wrong foot with it -- I need a dramatic change in my life ...

MOTHER
No ... no ... you can't ...

She runs to bathroom, weeping, locks herself in.

FATHER
You're gonna believe in Jesus Christ?

MICKEY
I know, it sounds funny ... I'm going to try.

FATHER
But why? We raised you as a Jew.

MICKEY
Yeah, but you don't have to keep a religion just because you were born into it ... You get older, you see what's around and you make a mature decision.

FATHER
But why Jesus Christ? Why, for instance, shouldn't you become a Buddhist?

MICKEY
That's totally alien to me ... Maybe, but ...

FATHER
You quit your job, you wander the streets like a bum, now this ... maybe we should just have you committed.

MICKEY
I need something to believe in. Look -- you're getting way up there in years? Do you have no fear of dying?

FATHER
Why should I be afraid?

MICKEY
Because you won't exist.

FATHER
So?

MICKEY
So that thought doesn't terrify you?

FATHER
Who thinks about such nonsense. Now I'm alive. When I'm dead I'll be dead.

MICKEY
Yes, but you're not frightened?

FATHER
Of what? I'll be unconscious.

MICKEY
Never to experience life again.

FATHER
How do you know?

MICKEY
It certainly doesn't look promising.

FATHER
Who knows what'll be? I'll be unconscious or not -- and if not I'll deal with it then. I'm not gonna worry now about what'll be when I'm unconscious.

MOTHER
(calling from behind bathroom door)
Of course there's a God, you idiot! You don't believe in God!?

MICKEY
(to door)
Look, just on a simplistic level ... if there's a God, why is there so much injustice and evil? Why were there Nazis?

MOTHER
(behind door)
Tell him, Max.

FATHER
How the hell do I know why there were Nazis? I don't know how the can opener works.

MICKEY
If there's no God, life has no meaning.

FATHER
Leave me alone, I got enough problems.

MICKEY
Unless one can accept that we only live once -- this is it -- there is no other meaning to life except what we put into it and that's good enough. I have trouble with that.

FATHER
Good. Become a Catholic. You'll go to heaven -- you'll play the harp. Rose -- get me an Alka-Seltzer.

83 CUT TO church -- a mass in progress -- beautiful singing.

Mickey is there observing. We continue the sound of the choir and WE CUT TO:

84 SHOT of Mickey and Father Flynn in office -- Flynn is giving him Catholic books to study. Music over.

85 CUT TO Mickey home reading the New Testament -- music over ...

86 CUT TO empty church -- music swelling on the soundtrack very religiously beautiful -- SHOTS of Mickey confronting Christ statue -- really trying to get with it. Must devise funny bits.

87 CUT TO street, outside a restaurant in theatre area. Hannah waits and Lee presently joins her.

HANNAH
Hi, where's Holly?

LEE
She was auditioning for a television commercial. She's late.

HANNAH
Is she ok?

LEE
You know Holly. She's manic when she's depressed. I think it was a good idea to take her to lunch.

HANNAH
I hope you told her it was your idea because everytime I try to be helpful she gets so defensive.

LEE
Oh, Hannah, she's embarrassed in front of you. She still wants to be you.

HANNAH
And how are you?

LEE
I'm ok.

HANNAH
You miss Ken?

LEE
No.

HANNAH
I can't believe Elliot and I can't think of someone for you to date.

LEE
And how are you? How's Elliot?

HANNAH
Irritable. Over the past months he's gotten more and more short-tempered. Something's gone very wrong somewhere but when I ask him, he just gets vague. I don't know if he's interested in someone else or what. I feel him slipping away from me.

Holly arrives and they begin to enter restaurant. She's manic.

HOLLY
Well I just came from an audition -- which I did not get -- so what's new? I'm too off-beat looking -- whatever the hell that means. But who's there auditioning? Naturally April. We said hello, I was very polite -- I maintained my poise.

LEE
I never trusted April. She's got eyes in the back of her head.

HOLLY
She and a certain architect are now a definite item. Which I still can't believe. Although it's put an end to the Stanislavski Catering Company. That's why I have to speak to you -- and you're going to get impatient but I need to borrow some more money.

HANNAH
It's ok.

HOLLY
What I've decided to do is some writing. I think I've had it with acting. Those meaningless auditions -- cattle calls ... and I can't handle another rejection ... Let's face it -- I've got to latch on to something in life, something with a future. I'm not sixteen anymore ... this is crazy. But I have an idea for a story -- more than one -- but I need time -- a few months or a year without worrying about rent ... so I can just concentrate.

Both other sisters sense her manic desperation throughout.

HANNAH
Gee, you never were interested in writing before.

HOLLY
I've picked up a lot about dramatic structure from doing scenes in acting class.

HANNAH
Yes but -- six months or a year -- if you spent it more productively.

HOLLY
Like what?

HANNAH
I don't know -- didn't Mom mention there was something possibly at the Museum of Broadcasting?

HOLLY
That's clerical.

HANNAH
Wasn't it in the publicity department? That can lead to other things.

HOLLY
Y'know, I knew you'd be discouraging.

HANNAH
I'm not. I'm trying to help. A person doesn't just declare one day: I'm finished as an actress and I'm a writer. And then blow a year just --

HOLLY
You mean not at my age.

LEE
Look, we came to have lunch.

HOLLY
Ok, forget it. What's to eat? I just want a salad.

HANNAH
Holly.

HOLLY
You really think I'm a loser, don't you?

HANNAH
You're being ridiculous.

LEE
You are, Holly. Stop it.

HOLLY
You treat me like a loser.

HANNAH
How?

HOLLY
You never have any faith in my plans. You always undercut my enthusiasm.

HANNAH
I've tried to give you honest advice. I'm happy to help you financially. I've gone out of my way to introduce you to interesting single men.

HOLLY
Losers, all losers.

HANNAH
You're too demanding.

HOLLY
I could always tell what you thought of me by the kind of men you fixed me up with.

LEE
Holly, you're being unreasonable.

HOLLY
Somewhere along the line I've disappointed you by not turning out the way you hoped and you sit in judgement.

HANNAH
I don't.

HOLLY
Not everybody is as gifted as you.

HANNAH
I struggled hard. Somebody had to take care of this family. It sure wasn't Mom or Dad.

(CONTINUED)

HOLLY
You never struggled. Not with anything. You don't know what it is to struggle.

LEE
Stop attacking Hannah. It's not fair. She's the last person in the world guilty of anything.

HANNAH
Look, you want to write? Write. Try it for as long as you want. If it doesn't pan out, we'll talk then. I don't know what else to say.

LEE
(with some inner guilt and upset)
Let's just get off the subject. We came to eat.

CUT TO change of season MONTAGE.

88 Snow. Winter DISSOLVES TO spring.

89 SHOT of Mickey studying to be Catholic, ext.

90 SHOT of Hannah and Elliot with kids, ext. He's distracted.

91 SHOT of Lee in hotel room with Elliot. Romantic.

92 SHOT of Lee alone, weeping.

93 SHOT of Elliot with psychotherapist.

ELLIOT
(to psychotherapist)
I can't seem to take action. I'm like Hamlet unable to stab his uncle. I want Lee but I can't harm Hannah. And in no other area am I a procrastinator. I run a big firm. I'm responsible for fortunes of money for my clients. I do great for them. They love me. I make big investment decisions. I'm decisive. And I'm like a father to them. They come to me with problems that go beyond their finances. Problems with their personal lives -- and I advise as a friend --
(MORE)

93 CONTD

ELLIOT (contd)
and they thank me -- they compliment me on my wisdom. What a joke.

94 He continues VO as WE CUT TO Lee walking on campus of Columbia.

ELLIOT (VO)
Meanwhile Lee's got no real direction. She's taking courses at Columbia, but just randomly. I try not to call her but she calls and then I call and we try to resist meeting but once in awhile we meet and inevitably wind up making love and then we both feel terrible ...

95 CUT BACK TO him live --

ELLIOT
But it's my fault. For all my education and accomplishments, my so called wisdom, I can't fathom my own heart.

96 CUT TO Holly writing, struggling with herself.

97 CUT TO Mickey at church. (Try to find amusing bits.)

98 CUT TO Lee with a woman psychic in her apartment.

PSYCHIC
I see a love affair -- ending in marriage.

LEE
Uh-huh.

PSYCHIC
The man is older than you ...

LEE
Right ... so you know when?

PSYCHIC
Soon.

LEE
Really? No big obstacles?

PSYCHIC
No -- but I see -- blood ...

LEE
Blood?

PSYCHIC
A relative ... a man ... married to someone close ... the husband of your sister ...

LEE
An accident?

PSYCHIC
Inflicted ... inflicted ... violence ...

99 CUT TO Halloween mask, PULL BACK, REVEAL Hannah and her parents and kids having Halloween fun.

Phone rings.

HANNAH
(on phone)
Hello?

100 CUT TO Holly's home.

HOLLY
Can I send you something to read? No -- I'm not finished. I'm completely blocked. I have a first scene which I wrote -- and an alternate one -- a part of a climax scene -- I'm so disorganized ... I want you to read it and give me an opinion ... Oh -- and I have a scene from something else completely. Lee read it but I need more feedback.

101 CUT TO Hannah.

HANNAH
(on phone)
Bring it over -- or leave it with the doorman. Ok, ok -- I have to run.

Hangs up, kids come rushing in with their lively chatter and requests.

102 CUT TO Elliot in hotel room. Lee enters.

LEE
Sorry I'm late.

ELLIOT
That's ok. What was the emergency?

LEE
I'm only staying a minute. I want to put an end to everything once and for all. No more meetings, no more phone calls.

ELLIOT
I don't deserve any different.

LEE
I've been just as at fault.

ELLIOT
I ask you to forgive me and please believe that I love you and always have and will.

LEE
I've got to be honest, Elliot. I've met someone else.

ELLIOT
What do you mean?

LEE
I told you I wasn't going to wait forever.

ELLIOT
It hasn't been forever.

LEE
It's been nearly a year since our first time and you're still married to my sister. Which I now realize is fine because you're probably more in love with her than you realize.

ELLIOT
Don't tell me you've met someone else because I've been angling and finagling and struggling to free myself for you. My life is a bad farce.

102 CONTD

LEE
If you had really wanted to, you would have. We've talked this to death already and we just go 'round in circles.

ELLIOT
I phoned you every day -- We had so many long talks -- and made plans.

LEE
Yes. In a way you led me on. I believed you were unhappy with Hannah. Otherwise I wouldn't have let myself be drawn in. Now I've met someone else.

ELLIOT
And you're in love overnight?

LEE
I like him very much. Where it'll lead I don't know.

ELLIOT
Lee, I'm so totally involved with you.

LEE
I can't help it. It's over.

103 CUT TO Elliot in street, shattered.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS
Suddenly it's all clear to me. Clear as a bell. I want Lee more than anything or anyone in the world. The thought of someone else being with her and making love to her is more than I can bear. It's like a veil has been lifted. Like I'm coming out of a dream.

104 CUT TO Hannah and Elliot at home that night.

HANNAH
(upset)
What are you telling me?

ELLIOT
That I need time by myself.

104 CONTD

HANNAH
I -- I don't know what to say. I'm so hurt.

ELLIOT
It's nothing you've done. I just need time to think. I'm confused. I know you want a child ... and that's been a question for me ... and I'm professionally dissatisfied ... and I've snapped at you on several occasions -- made you cry ...

HANNAH
Are you in love with someone else?

ELLIOT
No. Absolutely not. I don't want you to think that.

HANNAH
Do you not love me anymore?

ELLIOT
Of course I do. I guess I'm just going through something.

HANNAH
(frightened)
There must be someone else. You're not being honest.

ELLIOT
It's not a divorce or anything. Just a period of solitude -- reflection ... to find myself.

HANNAH
What kind of reflection? What are you talking about?

ELLIOT
Don't overreact.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS
Don't cave in now ... assure her it's temporary ... Once you're free you can try to put things back together with Lee. You can still do it. Don't let up now. You've got one foot out -- then it'll all be easier to terminate permanently.

ELLIOT
Come on, Hannah -- I'm asking for a little time to get my thoughts in order. It's silly for you to get alarmed. It's not a big deal. Trust me.

105 CUT TO Elliot in street phone booth. He's on the phone. EXT.

ELLIOT
I'm at Columbus Circle -- on the street. I've moved out. It's over.

106 CUT TO Lee at her home.

LEE
(on phone)
I know. Hannah called me. She's very upset.

CUT TO:

ELLIOT
(on phone)
When can I see you?

CUT TO:

LEE
(on phone)
We can't, Elliot. I'm seeing someone right now. I explained it all. If there's ever a change maybe we can see where we're at then.

CUT TO:

ELLIOT
(on phone)
You mean I'm free finally and I can't even see you? After all our talks and plans. I can't even see you? We can spend time together and I don't have torush home and you don't have to feel guilty. I'm a free man.

CUT TO:

LEE
(on phone)
I'm sorry, but at the moment, I'm very involved with someone.
(MORE)

LEE (contd)
Yes ... very involved. Totally. If you want to know the truth. Goodbye and please don't call me anymore.

107 CUT TO Elliot hanging up disconsolate.

108 CUT TO Hannah alone home ... wanders gloomy. Laconically opens manilla envelope and a mess of disorganized junk from Holly falls out.

HANNAH
(aimlessly glancing at material)
Act one ... scene one -- scene three ... Act three, scene three ... Notes notes on characters of Craig and Emily ... Scene one alternate ... Jesus, Holly ... brother ...

From inside a scene a letter drops to the floor. Here we must create the clear idea that it's a mistakenly included or lost letter.

Hannah picks it up, glances at it, reads with progressive interest.

HANNAH (contd)
Dear Holly -- your first act is very interesting. Also the end scene but my own opinion is that the two characters which you call Helen and Arthur but which obviously you have based on Hannah and Elliot, are not clearly drawn.
I see it from a totally different perspective. Helen is a woman who will always be admired by her husband but he will never feel passion for her. He will respect her intellect, her talent and discipline -- her fundamental decency, but there will always be something missing.
I can envision him as a man who might need someone who is less adept at handling life, perhaps even clumsy -- someone he can take care of and who leans on him rather than someone as self-sufficient as the character of Helen.
(MORE)

HANNAH (contd)
After all, Holly, in real life, we've both joked about it so often. Hannah is so damn perfect. So beautiful and so utterly competent that she leaves no room for anyone to reach out to her. How often have the two of us stood foolishly by as she came to our aid, each of us feeling humiliated over our needs and then grateful to her for answering them. Yet this gratitude brings with it a sense of dependency and finally I believe, resentment. If only we could repay her. If once she confessed some need that we could comfort her by supplying. My guess is -- and it is only guessing as I certainly would have no way of really knowing -- is that Hannah has brought much to Elliot's life but has not needed anything in return. I sense that this could, in time, build a wall between them. In answer to your question -- yes -- I can see, under the right circumstances, him feeling the need for someone else. But not the kind of woman you've drawn. Someone whose confusion and helplessness sparks something in him. I realize I'm no writer and my imagination may be running away with itself but it seems more plausible than the surfacey characters you've written.

Hannah considers this as WE CUT TO:

109 Art gallery opening. UP, musical scene. A small, bubbling crowd clucking over paintings by Ken, Lee's former beau.

They sip alcohol out of paper cups and extoll the genius of the artist.

FIRST MAN
They're wonderful. He reminds me of Heironymous Bosch.

FIRST WOMAN
But morbid, don't you agree?

SECOND WOMAN
I can't tell if they're fashionably alienated or fashionably narcissistic.

CUT TO Ken in corner being interviewed by art critic.

CRITIC
They're social, they're humorous, but are they art?

KEN
What Americans consider art is when they can see the technique. Flashiness. The other night at the theatre I saw a young actor playing an old man in a play and he was "acting" like an old man and full of cutesy mannerisms and at the end the audience stood on their feet and cheered. Made you want to puke.

MRS. BLINT
(with them)
This I take it are the seven layers of Hell?

KEN
Yes. Populated by the various deserving. Our politicians, our clergy, our press, our generals --

CRITIC
Are you anti-American?

KEN
No.
(pointing to canvas)
These are the members of the Politburo and they're eating feces.

CUT TO other side of the room and WE DISCOVER that April and David are two people at the opening.

DAVID
They're very funny in a nasty way. I love what he's saying about pseudo-intellectuals.

APRIL
Yes, David ... they have a truly penetrating quality ... almost
(MORE)

APRIL (contd)
what I'd call -- an "organic wholeness" -- I can't really put it in words.

DAVID
No, but I see exactly what you mean, darling.

CUT BACK TO Ken.

CRITIC
You consigned the press to hell and also politicians. How do you square that with something like Watergate, a press triumph.

KEN
When the press turns it's pious and fraudulent fangs on a hustler as bad as itself like Nixon, it's like a cobra and mongoose. I loved watching it but make no mistake -- I trust neither.

MRS. BLINT
(gesturing to drawing of Lee)
I like you best when you're simple -- here you're like another person -- a different artist -- it's unburdened beauty.

KEN
Yes ... well ... it's not for sale ...

110 CUT TO Mickey's parents' home. His father is dying. The doctor is there, a few either friends or relatives, one of which is consoling the distraught mother. Mickey enters, having raced over upon hearing news.

MICKEY
How is he?

DOCTOR
It was very sudden. He never knew what hit him.

Mickey hugs his mother. The onlookers must sparingly and quietly ad-lib an occasional appropos remark as Mickey goes to bedside and takes his just-about-dead father's hand.

Tears fill Mickey's eyes as he is kneeling bedside.

MICKEY
He looks so peaceful ... oh --

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS
It's so sad. I knew this day would come. He was such a nice guy.

MOTHER
(to comforter)
He used to take him to baseball games.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS
You can't believe this guy was once so strong and full of life ...

MOTHER
He always saw that Mickey had money in his pocket ...

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS
I had so many fights with him about ridiculous things but he always loved me ... And I dis-appointed him so ... Wanted me to be a teacher ... I didn't pay enough attention to him in his last years ... didn't think he had anything to show me ... But he was a sweet guy ... Took me to my first movie -- bought me my first book of philosophy -- Now what? Now they just throw a little dirt over his head and

(MORE)

110 CONTD

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)
that's it. He deserves better --
we all do. No one deserves this.

Mickey kneels now in prayerful position, clasping hands.

MOTHER
Don't pray to Jesus Christ for Max because it won't work ...

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS
The truth is I can't pray to anybody because I don't believe in anything. I can go through the motions but after months and months of trying to believe -- I can't do it. I want to so badly but I can't ... It just won't come ... I'll never believe in the Christian God -- or the Jewish God -- or anything -- It's all nothing. Everything is nothing. Life has no meaning. There's only suffering and loneliness and waiting to die. So why wait? May as well get it over with.

CUT TO:

111 EXT: HERMAN'S SPORTING GOODS STORE ON FORTY-SECOND STREET

CUT inside and buying a rifle from a Puerto Rican salesman is Mickey.

SALESMAN
It's a beauty, boy -- feel that action.

As Mickey awkwardly plays with the hammer or bolt.

MICKEY
And I can't buy a handgun?

SALESMAN
No -- we don't sell that -- You need a police permit. What kind of hunting you want to do?

MICKEY
Deer.

SALESMAN
With a handgun? You need this. It's a beautiful rifle -- very well made, easy to use -- and a good price.

111 CONTD

MICKEY
And I need bullets.

SALESMAN
How many?

MICKEY
One -- I mean one box.

112 CUT TO Hannah's apartment. She and Elliot are there, she's just finishing setting table.

ELLIOT
Where's my slipover?

HANNAH
In your drawer.

ELLIOT
I wish we weren't entertaining. I'm exhausted.

HANNAH
Because you didn't sleep last night. You tossed and tossed.

ELLIOT
I know -- I'm sorry if I kept you awake.

Downstairs buzzer rings.

HANNAH
(into house phone)
Yes -- yes -- send them up.
(hangs up)
They're here.

ELLIOT
(tense)
Right ... I wish we could have made it some other time ...

HANNAH
Oh come on -- Aren't you dying to meet her fiancé? Aren't you curious?

ELLIOT
They decided to marry so fast.

HANNAH
She fell for this guy like a tone of bricks. I've never
(MORE)

HANNAH (contd)
seen Lee so happy. She's radiant.

ELLIOT
Great.

HANNAH
She was shy about bringing him over at first but I insisted.

Bell rings --

They admit them ad-libbing hellos.

LEE
Doug -- this is my sister Hannah and her husband Elliot.

Ad-libs all around ...

Play the moment with Elliot looking at Lee and her fiancé --

113 CUT TO mid-dinner.

LEE
Doug's a professor at Columbia.

DOUG
Irish literature in general but my specialty is Yeats.

LEE
He knows every single fact about Yeats and every line he's ever written.

DOUG
Well I wouldn't say every line. Maybe there's a laundry list somewhere I missed.

As dinner chat continues ad-lib, we tune out.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS
That little nance. This is what she chooses over me? Yeats. He's probably one of those creeps that visits Ireland and walks on all the streets Yeats wrote about -- I'm surprised he doesn't collect memorabilia .. the poet's walking stick -- Yeats' old pipe -- his old toilet paper.

DOUG
I'm taking Lee to Ireland this summer ... to Sligo. I want to show her the tower where Yeats wrote some of his most interesting things.

114 CUT TO after dinner ... sitting around. Hannah is showing Doug family album. Elliot and Lee not present.

HANNAH
There's Lee at twelve. Wasn't she cute?

DOUG
She was very fat.

HANNAH
And there's Holly -- and me. And there's Dad. He was so handsome.

115 They ad-lib in this fashion and WE CUT TO Lee combing her hair in bathroom mirror. She finishes and exits and is suddenly confronted by Elliot.

ELLIOT
Lee --

LEE
Oh my god, you scared me.

ELLIOT
I have to talk to you.

LEE
Not now.

ELLIOT
Is it over between us? Completely? Forever?

LEE
I don't want to get into it here -- I'm going to marry Doug.

ELLIOT
You met him so recently.

LEE
I'm getting older -- I want a coherent life -- he's a lovely guy.

ELLIOT
I don't hear you say you love him.

LEE
I do love him.

ELLIOT
But not like we loved each other -- you can't love that little pedagogue with the same passion we had.

LEE
Now don't get insulting.

ELLIOT
I still love you -- very much. I moved out for you.

LEE
And then right back in I see.

ELLIOT
You wouldn't even see me -- what did you want me to do, live in a hotel room?

LEE
I see. Hannah's better than nothing, eh?

ELLIOT
Hannah's great -- but to me you're something special.

LEE
It's all for the best.

ELLIOT
I was staring at you all through dinner.

LEE
Shamefully.

ELLIOT
I wanted so badly to touch you -- to smell your hair and kiss you.

LEE
That's over forever.

ELLIOT
(trying to embrace her)
Don't say that. Please ...

She wriggles free -- he persists --

LEE
Stop. Stop it! You're drunk.

He won't give up, she's getting madder, he forces a kiss on her, then is practically taking her by force -- hand lifting her dress -- tearing at her pants --

ELLIOT
We've made love in more dangerous situations.

She's fighting it, objecting, he's almost raping her in a clumsy way --

116 WE CUT inside to Hannah and Doug.

HANNAH
This was Lee and my mother at the Jersey Shore.

Sound: A terrible scream from Elliot.

They drop everything and race into the back room, ad-libbing appropriately.

117 They find Lee and Elliot quite separate -- not caught at anything -- but apparently Lee has taken the letter opener and stabbed Elliot's hand -- but more than she intended, I guess, because he's bleeding terribly and in pain.

HANNAH
What happened?

LEE
I didn't mean it! Are you ok?

ELLIOT
(covering fast)
I was joking with Lee -- showing off and I fell on the letter opener somehow ...

DOUG
My god ... you're really bleeding.

LEE
It was my fault ...

HANNAH
(picking up weapon)
This thing is filthy -- you can get tetanus or gangrene --

DOUG
You better get him over to the emergency ward.

ELLIOT
I'm fine, I'm fine ... ooohhh ...

HANNAH
No -- you're going to need stitches. We'll get a cab.

LEE
I feel awful.

HANNAH
Don't feel bad. You didn't <u>stab</u> him.

DOUG
Shall we go along?

HANNAH
No -- we'll get a cab. It's right nearby ...

LEE
We should just go -- it'll be less confusion. I'm sorry, Elliot.

Elliot is a sorry sight, drenched in red -- hurt -- awkward as his wife escorts him to coat rack -- after placing towel around him ...

HANNAH
I never knew you to be such a kidder ... You usually never horse around. Too much wine.

118 INT: CAB - NIGHT

SHOT of them sitting in silence, demoralized.

119 EXT: CAB

120 CUT TO Mickey at home. Opening door to admit Holly.

MICKEY
What a surprise. When you called I was so shocked. It's been years.

HOLLY
This is so nice of you -- I know how busy you always are with the television productions --

MICKEY
I'm not busy -- I've been out of television for almost a year.

HOLLY
You have?

MICKEY
Yes -- I gave it all up ...

HOLLY
Well that's why I wanted to talk to you.

MICKEY
About television?

HOLLY
I didn't know you were out of it -- I have a project ... I wrote a script --
(which she has with her)
-- I mean the truth is, if this doesn't pan out, I'm going to have to waitress tables to keep afloat. I owe Hannah a fortune. And, er ...

MICKEY
How's Hannah?

HOLLY
Fine. I brought it with me.

MICKEY
Holly, I'm the wrong guy ...

HOLLY
Mickey, I know we never really hit it off but I was going through a rough period.

MICKEY
I'm sure.

HOLLY
It's a very good script ... At least I think ... I've never written anything before ... What are you doing?

MICKEY
Just been thinking ... re-evaluating my life ...

HOLLY
(jokingly)
Come to any conclusions?

MICKEY
Let me see your script.

HOLLY
Can I read it to you?

MICKEY
Read it to me? What am I, a cretin?

HOLLY
No, but I know how to emphasize certain parts ... It'll take no time ... I need some advice -- I need some help -- I'm really up against it ...

CUT TO two hours later, Holly's concluding.

HOLLY
(reads)
We all go through life playing the hand we're dealt.
Craig: What were you dealt?
Emily: Two high pair -- maybe even aces up. The problem is you got three deuces.
(Holly closes script)

MICKEY
Well gee I'm very surprised -- it's not bad at all.

HOLLY
Really?

MICKEY
It was damn interesting. I saw some weak spots but full of feeling.

HOLLY
No.

MICKEY
Yes. How did you ever think of that climax scene? ... Where the architect is taking his actress girlfriend home from the opera and the guy's schizophrenic wife is waiting for them and kills her? It was inspired.

HOLLY
It just came to me one day. But you think I can write?

MICKEY
I thought I'd have to make a polite excuse but I loved it. It's moving and funny and full of promise.

HOLLY
(excited)
Gee -- you wanna go have lunch?

MICKEY
Yeah. I'd love to talk about your script.

HOLLY
And I want to hear about what made you suddenly drop out of life. You used to be so ambitious. Ooh you liked it!

MICKEY
You sure you want to hear it?

She nods.

121 CUT TO the two of them walking someplace, chatting. Merely strolling.

We merely hear scoring and no dialogue -- Mickey, very animated, talking to her.

122 CUT TO second locale -- the two having coffee, the music playing, the conversation continues -- now some personal laughs.

123 CUT TO third location -- someplace stable like a park bench or whatever.

HOLLY
I don't understand. If you've been so tortured by this spiritual crisis -- to the point of buying a rifle ... What happened? What changed you? Why didn't you use the rifle?

MICKEY
I nearly did.

124 CUT TO memory CUT -- Mickey alone in apartment.

MICKEY (VO)
I brought it home and I loaded it --
(suiting action to word)
-- and I pressed it to my head ... I didn't want to miss ... my luck I'd be a vegetable ... And then I thought -- this is crazy -- I'm bringing about the very thing I dread most.
(lowers rifle)
But then I thought -- how could I exist in a Godless universe?
(raises gun)
But then I thought -- how do I know it's Godless ... I mean it seems like it is ... but I can't prove it ...
(lowers gun)
And I vacillated for what seemed like forever ... thinking, do it -- there's no God -- and then -- don't do it, because no one really knows -- even those big shots who claim to have it all figured out ...
(raising and lowering gun)
And I thought -- boy -- it's a very slim reed to hold onto -- that maybe -- maybe -- we're part of a meaningful plan ... maybe ... to base your life on a maybe ... And I thought and thought and I got more and more tense and then without realizing it --

The gun goes off -- not at Mickey, with a loud blast ... Mickey panics and in comic fashion can't shake loose of gun which discharges several times ... His mirror splatters.

Panic-stricken, he dumps gun on floor.

Neighbors pound on door -- he kicks gun under bed --

Opens door.

NEIGHBOR
You ok? We heard shots.

MICKEY
Not from here ... I heard 'em too ... got so scared I walked into my mirror ... ha, ha ...

Because they've skeptically noticed carnage.

NEIGHBOR
We better call the police.

125 CUT TO Mickey in street after incident.

MICKEY (VO)
(as he walks)
I was so shaken up I ran out of my apartment and walked the streets ... I just walked for hours, my hands shaking ... I went into a bar and had a drink ... me -- a drink ... and I felt calmer ... And after awhile I got tired but I was afraid to go back home ... so I wandered into a movie house to sit ... I didn't care what was playing ...

He wanders into cinema ... sits ...

MICKEY (VO contd)
... and I sat there thinking ... and then I looked up at the screen ... and all these people were singing and dancing ... and I got hooked on it ... and I started to feel ... How can you kill yourself? ... Isn't it stupid? ... Look at all these people up there ... I mean what if the worst is true and there's no God and you go around once and that's it? Don't you want to be part of the experience? I mean it's not all a drag ... there's still music ... I guess music's real important to me, Holly ... that's why I got so mad at you that night we went out ...

And as I sat there I thought that I should stop ruining my life searching for answers I'm never going to get but enjoy it while it lasts and after -- well -- who knows?

(MORE)

MICKEY (VO contd)
And maybe it does require having a shot of whiskey once in awhile and going through some sleepless nights and depending an awful lot on that slim reed -- maybe -- maybe ... but is it really wise to kill yourself?

And then, who comes on the screen but old Bing Crosby and I got kind of hooked on the movie ... and for the first time in a year, I took a deep breath and relaxed a little ...

126 CUT TO Mickey walking to river with packaged rifle. VO continues.

MICKEY (VO contd)
And I went home and got my rifle and decided to throw it into the river forever --

By river, he's about to, package opens, rifle falls out, a cop sees him.

MICKEY (VO contd)
And a cop saw me dumping it ...

SHOT of Mickey leaning forward on his hands, cops with guns drawn frisking him ...

MICKEY (VO contd)
And he arrested me but I explained it all to them.

127 CUT BACK to present with Holly.

HOLLY
I always regretted the way I behaved that evening we went out. I made such a fool of myself.

MICKEY
Oh no, I was the inflexible jerk. Actually, maybe it <u>was</u> you.

HOLLY
No.

MICKEY
Would you like to try it again?

HOLLY
I'd love to.

MICKEY
How 'bout tonight?

128 CUT TO Thanksgiving a year later. Hannah's apartment. Everyone is there -- her sisters with their beaus, Mickey now going with Holly. Parents. Hannah, Elliot. A few friends. Holly hasn't arrived yet.

Much ad-lib gaiety ... Mostly about the food and small talk.

MICKEY
(drinking)
It's astonishing -- I've been to these Thanksgiving dinners in the past as your son-in-law ... now I'm here again as your son-in-law -- only the daughters have changed.

EVAN
Where is Holly? She's late.

MICKEY
She'll be here. She had an errand.

LEE
I thought that last thing she wrote was wonderful. She's really developed.

MICKEY
We're working on one that's funny. At least the idea's funny. But she can write funny dialogue.

HANNAH
Any more wine, anyone? Mickey? --

MICKEY
We were married for years -- I never drink wine.

NORMA
Hannah, can I tell everyone you're going to play Desdemona?

People respond with some delighted surprise.

HANNAH
Oh, Mom -- it's only television.

NORMA
But it's public television and for me Shakespeare doesn't get
(MORE)

NORMA (contd)
any finer than Othello -- you with some big, black stud -- I love it.

The gaiety continues and WE SEE Lee and Doug very happy together.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS
Oh Lee -- you are something. I find you more beautiful than ever. Marriage agrees with you. Funny -- everyone's having such a nice time and here I'm mingling and joking but underneath I'm crushed. Totally wiped out. Fortunately these get togethers are infrequent and I don't get to see you very often -- because the truth is, the minute I lay eyes on you I realize how much I still care about you. Not that I'll ever cause any grief again. Not that you'd ever consider me again after the way I bungled everything. And it's probably just as well. My life works with Hannah. I love her and she's wonderful. But it's very different. As big a fool as I made of myself I had a feeling for you that I've never experienced before or since. Not a day goes by that I don't think of you at one moment or another -- though hopefully that will pass with time -- but on those rare occasions that I see you -- I feel so alive and yet so empty -- so unhappy that I'm not sure I can bear it.

He throws back his drink and stares out the window or something.

Bell rings.

Ad-libs of "That must be Holly."

Holly enters, ad-lib greetings ...

NORMA
When are you going to write something for your father and I to play in ...

EVAN
Don't pay attention to her. We can't remember our lines anymore.

NORMA
Speak for yourself, gramps.

Lee and Doug are chatting with Mickey.

LEE
It's great living up by Columbia. All those students so full of hope -- they look great ... I just love it ... And Doug and I are hoping to rent something in the Hamptons next summer.

MICKEY
I like the ocean. It's romantic and moody.

DOUG
The gong-tormented sea.

Evan plays a song on piano -- Rodgers and Hart for example.

HANNAH'S THOUGHTS
They think that I'm the one they lean on -- but if they only knew how dependent on them I am ... If I could only make Elliot feel it -- and the others ... maybe ...

CUT TO Evan who now is finished with song and goes into Cole Porter. Let's say the tune Bobby Short did the night Mickey and Holly had their abortive date.

Laughter, gaiety. Mickey and Holly find themselves alone momentarily.

MICKEY
It's so ironic ... life ... I was saying before you came, how I've been here before but as Hannah's husband. I loved her very much. I never thought I'd love again -- but the human heart is remarkable. There's a story in this. A guy marries two sisters. His first marriage breaks up, some years later he's back in her house, married to her sister and completely
(MORE)

MICKEY (contd)
in love with her. I mean, Holly
-- how you gonna top that?

HOLLY
(after a look
she says)
Mickey -- I'm pregnant.

FADE OUT.